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Vol. XXXI.

Harry Somers, the Magician.

BY S. W. PEARCE.



THEN AS THEY OBEYED, HARRY PITCHED THE DOG AFTER THEM AND SEIZED THE FALLS.

Harry Somers,

The Sailor-Boy Magician;

OR,

The Old Bo'sen's Strange Land Cruise.

BY S. W. PEARCE,
AUTHOR OF "THE BOY DETECTIVE," "YOUNG BOY FROM
THE COUNTRY," "FORTUNES OF A NEWSBOY,"
"BOY BEFORE THE MAST," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE SAILORS' WARNING—DRIVEN TO DESPERATION—A
COWARDLY ACT—BILL TRAVIS GIVES HIS OPINION—A
MUTINEER'S FATE—THE MIDNIGHT ATTACK.

"AVAST there a moment, shipmate! It's just as well to be sure of your course afore you clap on all sail. S'posen ye *do* succeed in capturin' the ship—and I allow your chances are doubtful—what's the result? As soon as you get ashore they'll slip a noose over your head and trice you up in a twinklin'. *That's* the punishment for mutiny on the high seas, as ye all know."

"Clap a stopper on yer jaw-tackle fur a minit, Bill Travis!" growled an old weather-beaten sailor, gruffly, "an' listen to me. Man and boy I've sailed the seas nigh onto forty year. I say plainly that I'd sooner be shot down like a dog, than finish this v'y-age under such a brut- as our skipper. You know, as well as any of us, that his act in shooting Tom Lawler from the top-sail yard arm to-day, because he did not move as quick as suited the skipper's fancy, war nothing less than cold-blooded murder."

"For which he will have to answer as soon as we reach port," replied Bill Travis, determinedly.

"That's all gammon," demurred the first speaker, doggedly. "Who ever heard of a skipper being punished for any brutality to his men? We'd be locked up in jail as witnesses, while he'd be off to sea under bonds, and the case would never come to trial. Ye're a sensible man, Bill Travis; so listen to a word of advice: We're goin' to take the ship. *That's* settled! If you don't want to get mixed up in the affair you needn't; but don't try to betray us, or it will go hard with you."

"What's in the wind now, Bill?" demanded a manly lad as he approached.

The speaker, who had uttered the threat, gave a warning glance to his late confidant and shuffled for'ard.

Old Bill Travis thoughtfully shifted the huge quid to the other cheek and looked gravely in the face of the lad before him.

"Where's Snowball?" asked the old salt, at length.

"Woolly-head? He's for'ard on the fo'castle playing with Bosun, I suppose. Why?"

"Do you think he can be trusted to keep a secret?"

"Yes; if I tell him to keep it, keep it he will; but, what's in the wind, Bill? You look as sober as a deacon after a poor collection. Has the skipper been r'ilin' you, too?"

"Not as yet, my lad."

Harry Somers looked the old sailor squarely in the face for a moment, and said:

"There is something behind all this mystery I know; I can see there's a storm brewin' that means mischief; but I don't exactly understand what quarter it's coming from."

The old sailor glanced around to see that no one was near.

"The matter is this, Harry: The skipper and his mates—for they are all tarred with the same brush—exceptin' the first mate perhaps—have beat and bullied the men until they say they will stand it no longer. They say truly, that his shooting of poor Tom from the yard was nothing less than murder. That act roused their worst passions, and, if they

succeed, will be his death-warrant. They are going to make the attempt to seize the ship!"

"Good!" ejaculated the lad, warmly: "it will serve the brute right! I'd like nothing better than to see them flog him within an inch of his life."

Bill Travis drew a long sigh before replying:

"You are young yet, my lad, and don't understand the terrible meaning of the word *mutiny*. I saw one once in my experience, but had no part in it. The mutineers failed that time, after a terrible and desperate struggle. The two ringleaders were fearfully and fatally wounded, but they were not allowed to die in peace. They were hanged at the yard-arm when the death-rattle was already in their throats! I'll never forget that sight to the longest day of my life, and I never want to see another outbreak on ship-deck. I don't like the looks of this affair; but I don't see how I can put a stop to it."

"You're the best judge of your own actions, I suppose, Bill," remarked the lad, gravely. "For my part I think the skipper deserves death for his cowardly acts and his unmitigated brutality. However, if you think best I'll find some way to warn him of his danger."

"No, no, lad!" was the reply; "you know he has been drinking heavily of late and that makes him more savage. He might disbelieve you and punish you for attempting to frighten him. Or, again, if he believed it there's no telling what cruelty he might commit on the men in revenge. No, my lad, in this case we can do nothing but let matters take their own course. The crew expect no help from us and only ask that we stand aside out of their way when the decisive moment comes. We are only passengers on this craft, after all, and the result will not affect our own safety, either way, if we are utterly neutral. Yonder African coast is peopled with savages; but I would much rather take my chances for life among them than see the end of the voyage in this ship after *they* have gained control. Good men as they are under discipline, when once they are masters of the ship they may become devils."

Let us in as few words as possible explain to the reader the situation of affairs more clearly:

Harry Somers, the lad to whom we have briefly alluded, was about eighteen years of age at the time of which we write. His frame was rather slender than otherwise, but his carriage conveyed an air of quiet self-possession and conscious strength. Only a few years previous he had been poring studiously over his books at boarding-school. Whatever he attempted he did with all his determination to succeed. His close application had very nearly undermined his health.

Mr. Somers, a wealthy shipowner and retired sea-captain, had noted his son's overwork and resolved to effect a change, and, thinking it all over he suggested to Harry a trip to China, feeling confident that the sea-air and removal from close confinement for awhile would be far more effective than doctors' prescriptions.

Harry eagerly accepted an offer so much to his taste. His love for the sea had been inherited from his father. The course once determined upon, Harry had been furnished a cabin passage in one of his father's ships. Free from all the cares of study, he began to improve from the start.

Full of life and animal spirits, he was quickly the favorite of all on board. Before the trip out was half ended he had already begun to grow tough and hardy. He took to the new life as readily "as a duck takes to water," as one of the sailors expressed it.

Quick to learn, the crew delighted in teaching him a sailor's duties. Lithe and supple as a cat, he was always among the first to spring in the rigging when duty called. His father had given orders that he should be allowed to assist whenever he felt so inclined. He was consigned to the old boatswain, Bill Travis, as a special charge, by Mr. Somers, and under his "guardian's" instructions Harry prospered famously.

But the trip was not destined to end so fortunately. When within a week of their destined port, they were caught in a terrible tornado, which literally tore the vessel to pieces.

The ship was dashed on the shore of a desolate island and totally wrecked. Old Bill Travis and our amateur sailor boy had succeeded in reaching the shore after desperate efforts, more dead than alive. Their clothing had been literally torn to rags in their battle for life; but they were still thankful, for of the late crew they only remained alive to tell the story!

By daylight the storm had died out and they could see the wreck of the noble vessel only a few hundred yards away. One of the boats, capsized and partly stove, was lying near them on the beach. Patching it up as best they could, they paddled out in the now quiet sea to the wreck. Luckily they managed to secure a goodly supply of provisions besides their personal effects.

Among these was a box belonging to Harry and containing various queer articles. The lad had often amused his late friends by feats of legerdemain which had excited their wonder. It was more his natural love for the art of magic than any other reason which prompted him to take this chest with him, that was destined to play a peculiar and important part in his future career.

Rigging up a sail for their craft, they steered for a neighboring island which the old sailor knew was occasionally visited by ships in search of water. After three weeks' waiting, they had at length taken passage in the vessel where we now find them.

It was eight bells (twelve o'clock) before they finished their conversation and speculations on the future. Then they sought their berths and turned in for the night with many anxious forebodings.

An hour passed with nothing to excite their apprehensions, and they fell asleep. Suddenly they were awakened by the sound of pistol-shots mingled with oaths and the trampling of many feet overhead.

CHAPTER II.

THE MUTINY—CURSES COME HOME TO ROOST—THE DYING MATE'S WARNING—HARRY FORMS A PLAN—THE MYSTERIOUS VIAL—THE TOAST—AN INTERRUPTION.

At the sound of the first pistol-shot, Harry sprung from his berth, snatching his revolver from beneath his pillow as he did so; but a word from the old boatswain recalled him to his senses, and he realized that the terrible tragedy had begun.

"I don't fancy this being neutral," said he, as he threw down his weapon in disgust. "Hey, you Snowball!"—to the little trembling darky near him—"what's the matter with you that your teeth are rattling like castanets? Get out of the range of that companionway before a stray bullet comes along!"

With a yell as he recognized the danger he had been in, the darky sprung to one side.

"Golly, Mars'r Harry, we's done gone fur, dis time! Oh, my poor mammy! I wish I war back on de ole Virginny shore. De pirates have ketched us, shuah."

"Well, you'll be a first-rate subject to sail under the black flag," responded Harry, with grim humor, but added, soberly—"I wish it was all over with."

"So do I, my lad."

"I can't stand this suspense any longer."

"What would you do?"

"I'm going to take a look for myself."

So saying Harry ascended the companionway and cautiously peered out. In the moonlight he could see plainly all that was transpiring. Amidships a terrible struggle was taking place. Strong-nerved as he was, he could not repress a shudder at the sight which met his eyes. Mingled with the quick reports of firearms were the oaths of the wounded.

The crew plainly had not succeeded in effecting the complete surprise they had intended. Possibly their sullen manner and mysterious whisperings had

awakened a suspicion of danger in the mind of the brutal captain, and made him wary and watchful.

Both he and his three mates were fighting desperately and with fatal effect.

It was a battle of four heavily-armed men against ten desperate sailors armed only with such weapons as came readily to hand.

But they fought with the stubborn determination of those to whom life under such circumstances was of little value. For nearly ten minutes the hand-to-hand struggle was kept up; then the hoarse yell of triumph that broke from the lips of the crew told that the mutiny had been successful!

The yell of conflict had died away, and only the feeble moans of the wounded was now heard in its place.

Stretched out on the deck lay the brute in human form whose cruelty to the men had brought about this fearful result. He was gasping and cursing with a half-dozen gaping wounds upon him.

Harry Somers and the old boatswain approached the spot where the crew stood gazing silently upon their work.

"Hello, Bill!" remarked Jack Bowline, the leader of the mutiny, as he bound a handkerchief around his wounded hand shattered by a bullet. "We've taken the law in our own hands, you see, as I said we would, and I reckon the land-sharks will be sharper than I think for if they ever catch us."

"Curse you!" hissed the wounded captain, his eyes fixed on them defiantly; "I could die easier if I could see you strung up to the yard-arm!"

"Curses come home to roost, Cap," replied the sailor, coolly.

Just as was the retribution which had fallen upon the wretch, Harry could but pity him in his sufferings. Going forward for a moment, he presently returned with a cup of water which he was about to offer the dying man; but the mutineers were in no frame of mind to show pity, and Jack Bowline interposed to prevent the kindly act.

"Let him alone, youngster!" said he, coldly; "we will show him the same pity he gave our shipmate when he shot him down like a dog. Yonder lies the fust mate. We would have spared him if we could, for he's acted more like a white man toward us. I'm afeard, though, that he's done for, this time. Give him the water if you want to."

So the dying tyrant was refused even that last trifling act of mercy. His cruelty must have indeed been great to so harden the hearts of his enemies toward him.

"I'm afeard you're goin' too far, Jack," warned Bill, shaking his head in disapproval. "Even a heathen would hardly be as cruel as that. The skipper can do nobody any more harm, an' it's my opinion that refusing a dying wretch a cup of cold water will bring you bad luck in the end."

"Well, you'll have none of it to answer for," was the reply, given in surly tones, for the men, smarting under their wounds, with their dying shipmates around them, were in no mood to listen to reason.

Bill Travis saw this; also that there was a feeling among them of distrust toward himself because he had refused to take part with them.

"We won't quarrel about it, mates," said he, quietly, "and I think we'd better see what can be done for our shipmates that are wounded. There'll be plenty of time to talk this matter over afterward."

Recalled to the present by the sensible advice they proceeded to alleviate the sufferings of their companions as far as lay in their power, in which duty Bill rendered them valuable service.

Meanwhile Harry knelt down and raising the head of the wounded officer presented the glass to his lips and brushed back the hair from his temples.

"This is a terrible sight for you, my lad," said the wounded man, faintly. "I feared this from the first, and warned the captain that he was going too far but he would not listen."

Then he confided a few loving words to be conveyed to the wife he would never more meet on earth, and relapsed into unconsciousness.

Harry pulled off his jacket and placed it under the man's head for a pillow; then, rising to his feet, he beheld Bill Travis standing beside him.

With the exception of the wounded around them and the man at the wheel, the deck was deserted. The crew feeling the need of stimulants at that time had descended into the cabin.

"Bad business this," muttered the old sailor, shaking his head gravely.

"What's the result, Bill?"

"Three of the crew are stone-dead, besides the second and third mates. Cap'n Rogers, as you see, will hardly live a half-hour longer. I'm sorry for the first mate, for he was a square sort of fellow and died defending his employer's property. How this thing is going to end the Lord only knows; but it will bring 'em nothing but bad luck; I'm sure of that."

The sound of noisy mirth came from the direction of the cabin, mingled with the clatter of glasses.

"They've found the skipper's grog already," said he, quietly, and as he spoke he stooped down and picked up the emptied revolver which the captain had lately used. Without a word he thrust it in the bosom of his shirt.

"I have cartridges in my chest that will fit it," remarked Harry, who divined his thought, as he said:

"I don't think, though, that the crew will bother their heads about us—at least not to do us any harm, at present."

"That remains to be seen, my lad. When men get filled with liquor they have queer fancies come in their heads."

The mate groaned faintly, and Harry once more knelt at his side.

"You are a brave lad and a good one," said the dying man, with an effort. "I feel that I've sailed my last voyage on earth, my boy, but there is still a chance for you. Under the mattress in my room you will find a bag of gold. Take it and conceal it, for it may prove of great service to you. Above all get clear of this fated ship as quickly as possible. Your lives are in danger while you remain on board. Crazy with liquor they will blame you for not taking part with them in their mad act, and be suspicious as to what you might do to endanger their safety on reaching port."

His strength failed him and he sunk back with a sigh.

Harry once more rose to his feet and confronted his friend.

"Did you hear the mate's words?"

"Yes."

"What do you think?"

"Just as he says, my lad."

"Then what would it be best to do, under the circumstances?"

The old sailor gazed to leeward and sighed.

"I'm all adrift like a ship without a rudder," he slowly remarked. "If we were only safely ashore, yonder, I might be able to get my bearings and lay out a new course for us to steer by."

"Well, we'll do it, Bill."

"Impossible."

"Leave it to me," said Harry, suddenly, as he darted forward and disappeared.

Hurriedly unlocking his chest he took out a small vial which he concealed in his bosom.

Then passing aft, he nodded mysteriously to his old friend, and disappeared in the cabin.

The men were already beginning to feel the effects of the liquor they had consumed. They happened to be in a jovial mood when the lad entered.

"Just in time, Harry, my boy!" cried the ring-leader, filling another glass and pushing it toward him. "Here's destruction to all tyrants, and a speedy voyage."

Our sailor-boy detested liquor with all his heart; but he had no desire to affront the men at this time.

Besides, he had a part to act, and this afforded him a most favorable opportunity; so he followed their example and raised the glass to his lips.

Nevertheless he had not the slightest intention of swallowing its contents. As the crew suspected nothing wrong, their attention was fixed upon their own glasses, and thus Harry found no difficulty in adroitly tossing the dram over his shoulder.

"Pretty good stuff that, boys," remarked Harry, as he coolly replaced his glass on the table. "If I—"

"Sail ho!" cried the deep voice of Bill Travis from the deck.

With blanched faces, the half-drunken crew dropped their glasses and struggled up on the quarter-deck.

CHAPTER III.

THE MYSTERIOUS VIAL—DANGER AHEAD—HARRY GIVES HIS PLANS—SNOWBALL IN SERVICE—THE CUTTER LOADED—THE ENEMY BECOMES ALARMED.

Nothing could have been more opportune for the boy's purpose than the sudden desertion of the cabin. There was no telling how quickly they might return, so there was not a moment to be lost.

Hurriedly drawing the vial from his pocket he poured its contents into the half-emptied decanter on the table; then listening for a moment, to assure himself that there was no danger of interruption, he darted into the room lately occupied by the first mate.

It was but the work of a moment to thrust his hand under the mattress of the berth. His hand came in contact with a small and weighty canvas bag, which slipped from his grasp and fell to the floor with a metallic jingle, but hastily he snatched it up and thrust it in the bosom of his shirt, and assuming an air of perfect composure, which he was far from feeling, he emerged into the cabin again, just as the crew were beginning to return.

Their appearance showed that they had experienced something of a scare.

"Dash my t. plights, mates, but I was quite shook up, just now," declared Jack Bowline, with a forced laugh, as he once more seated himself at the table and reached for the decanter. "To tell the truth, mates, I don't feel over anxious to sight any craft about now."

"Nor I," responded one of his companions, quickly. "I wish we were well out of this scrape. What's best to be done?"

"That's easy settled," responded Bowline; "all we have to do is to slip in some out of the way port and quietly slip out; every man for himself. We'll talk no more business to-night though. Fill up your glasses, shipmates, and we'll drink to the health of the dead skipper."

From this remark Harry knew that the tyrant had gone to his final account.

The boy was also becoming anxious to return to his friend on deck—the more so as he saw that Bowline was watching him with something of suspicion.

"You don't take kindly to the grog, my lad," he said, gruffly, as he filled a glass and pushed it toward our hero. This is A. No. 1 Santa Cruz and no mistake;—nothing to turn your nose up at, I assure you."

From his manner, Harry saw that it would be a delicate task to refuse without giving offense; yet he had the best reason for not wishing to taste the liquor now.

"You really must excuse me, Jack," said he, with a good-natured laugh. "The fact is I'm not used to drinking, and that other glass seems to have gone to my head. I think I'll have to step on deck and get a breath of fresh air."

Very anxious indeed, but with that same well-assumed air of indifference he awaited the reply.

"As you please, youngster," said Bowline. "You're welcome to come and go as you please."

while you're aboard this craft, so long as you don't try to interfere with our plans. You and Bill Travis took no hand in the scrimmage; but if you work out the latitude and longitude for us, and Bill will take his trick at the wheel, I guess we can manage to call it a square deal."

A scowl passed over the faces of the men at this allusion to neutrality. It was evident their feelings were not of the kindest toward those who had stood aloof.

Harry saw that it needed but a breath to blow the smothered fire into a flame. He was resolved on his part to give them no such pretext.

"Wait until some other time, Jack," said he, "and then I will tell you our reasons for staying out of the fight. You succeeded without us all the same, and so of course we can claim no share in the spoils, but there will be the more to divide up among you for it."

"That's a fac'," hiccoughed one of the men approvingly; "never thought of that; more spoils for us. Set 'em up ag'in."

"Besides," continued the lad, "we will of course help you all we can while we remain on board."

So saying, he turned, and mounting the companionway emerged on deck and rejoined his companion.

He found the old sailor anxiously awaiting him.

"What in the name of Neptune have you been driving at, my lad?" he asked.

"Come for'ard, Bill!" was the guarded reply; "I'll tell you all."

Reaching the fore-castle he laid his hand upon the arm of his old friend and said quietly:

"I've given them a dose of laudanum in their grog that will soon settle their hash."

"You don't mean to say that you've p'izenized the lot!" gasped Bill, dismayed.

Harry laughed as he saw the mistake his mess-mate had fallen into.

"Oh no, Bill; I've no desire to harm them; only to cut their claws a little. I've heard enough to know that they do not love us very tenderly. I have only given them enough to make them sleep for a few hours if they drink it all; but, before they come round again we must be far out of their reach; do you see?"

"Ay, ay, my lad. Blast my eyes if you haven't a long head on yer young shoulders!" declared the old sailor, in tones of admiration.

"What's your next move, my boy?"

"First we must get all our traps, with provisions enough to last us for a week, and place them in the cutter that hangs on the lee-quarter. We will want besides, a compass and something that will serve us for a sail, for there is no telling where we may fetch up, finally. Your experience is better than mine in such a case as this, so I will leave it to you to see that all the required articles are put in the boat. Above all, do not forget my magic chest, for there is a good stock of medicines in it that may come useful."

"You've overlooked one very important obstacle, my lad—the man at the wheel. Do you propose to knock him in the head?"

"Oh no," responded Harry, laughingly; "there is a much easier way than that out of the difficulty. I've seen by his manner that he is most anxious to join his companions in the cabin and get a taste of the grog. I'll do him a good turn, and put the crew in good humor with us for a season, by taking his place. While I am doing that you can go for'ard and get up the necessary traps that we will need. I'll go to the wheel at once. He will be only too glad to be relieved. As soon as you see the coast is clear, get the dunnage in the boat. By the way, hunt up Snowball, and if he isn't too frightened to move he can help you in the job. Hanged if I hadn't forgot all about the little darky. Fortunately the night is clear—Hello, yonder is a sail!"

"Yes," was the reply, "that's the one that I reported while you was below in the cabin, but she

paid no attention to us whatever, and of course we wasn't anxious to make her acquaintance, either."

"Nevertheless, she was the means of doing me a great favor," said Harry, thoughtfully, as he walked aft.

The old sailor gazed after him with a look of undisguised admiration.

"He's born to command," he remarked, with a chuckle. "I haven't got the head for business like him, but I can carry out orders every time."

As he turned to the task allotted him, Harry approached the steersman. His quick eye saw that the bodies of the slain had disappeared. A slight shiver passed over him as he felt they had been consigned to the sea with no mark of outward respect. The first mate was still breathing, but unconscious.

"They're all in Davy Jones's locker by this time, youngster," said the steersman, noting Harry's glance.

"Well, it's no business of mine," replied the lad, gravely. "However, it's all over with now. I'm all worked up over what I've seen, and need something to occupy my mind. Let me take your trick at the wheel; that will give me something else to think of, anyhow."

A look of delighted satisfaction overspread the sailor's face as he hastily closed with the offer so unexpected.

"You're a trump, youngster!" said he, as he relinquished his post. "My throat is as dry as if I had h'isted a load of salt mack'el, and my mates below haven't so much as asked me if I had a mouth. Anyhow, there's plenty of grog on board."

So saying, he turned away and hurriedly passed into the cabin.

"So far, all is working well," muttered Harry.

Presently old Bill Travis reappeared with a huge bundle which he deposited in the boat on the quarter; then silently departed again.

It was not long before the little darky put in an appearance, though with shaking knees, and a thoroughly frightened air.

For the next half-hour both of them were kept busy at their task, while Harry kept a wary watch upon his enemies in the cabin.

But the crew below were rapidly becoming less hilarious in their demonstrations. The drug was beginning to make manifest its effect.

While Harry was thus keenly noting all that was transpiring around him, he was suddenly startled by something stealthily brushing against his knees. Glancing down he saw it was the ship's dog.

"Hello, 'Bosun,' old fellow!" said he, patting the head of the noble Newfoundland; "I had forgotten all about you. Never mind, though; you shall share our fortunes."

The animal looked up in his face as if he understood the words addressed him; then wagging his tail he curled himself up on the deck at the lad's feet.

Soon after the old sailor stole cautiously to the cabin and looked down; then, with an air of satisfaction, he turned and approached the wheel.

"It's all right, my lad," said he, quietly. "The crew are all befuddled as you kalkerlated they'd be. Howsumever, the sooner we are well rid of 'em the better I'll be satisfied. It looks like a confounded shame to leave such a crack ship as this in the care of such a crowd. No doubt they'll scuttle and sink her and the story of her true fate will never be known to the world. There's no telling, either, whether we will live to tell our story."

"There, Bill," interrupted the lad, good-humoredly; "we want no croaking. We have not been to blame in this matter, and so I'm not looking for bad luck on account of it. You and Snowball get in the boat and I'll lower her."

Then as they obeyed, Harry pitched the dog after them and seized the falls. So far all had worked to the utmost perfection in the plans he had laid.

But a sudden surprise was yet in store for him.

CHAPTER IV.

AN UNLOOKED-FOR OBSTACLE—HARRY'S DARING LEAP—THE MUTINEERS IN PURSUIT—THE RIFLE-SHOT AND ITS EFFECT—IN THE HANDS OF SAVAGES—A PROMISE OF SPORT.

ALL went well until the rattle of the sheaves in the blocks awakened the sluggish faculties of the drunken crew below.

Depending upon the old sailor's report, Harry had timed his escape just a little too soon, for the noise had excited the attention of the men below.

Fright, or a sudden suspicion of trickery then partly counteracted the effect of the drug they had imbibed, and just as the boat touched the water, and Harry had thrown the last turn off the pins, allowing the falls to unreeve, the crew came staggering on deck.

"A thousand furies!" ejaculated Jack Bowline, the leader, taking in the situation at a glance. "You thought to give us the slip, eh, my hearties? Well, not as we know on you don't!"

As he spoke he sprang forward in drunken fury to seize the lad, but, at the sight of a revolver held menacingly in Harry's hand he stopped still, but with an air of mischief.

"Look you, Jack!" said the lad, coolly, "we are going to part company with you, and I should prefer to do it peacefully, but, *go we will!*"

"Not if we know it you don't, young feller!" retorted Jack, fiercely.

Harry glanced around. The boat was slowly drifting astern. What was done would have to be done quickly. He backed away as the mutineers approached him. There were none of them armed, and it would have been an easy matter to shoot one or two of their number and escape in the confusion. But, he was averse to shedding blood if it could be avoided.

Jack Bowline, feeling sure he would not fire when the odds were so heavily against him, advanced until he was within arm's length of the boy. This was the moment for which Harry had waited. Suddenly shooting out his right fist, he struck the sailor a blow under the chin which sent him sprawling upon his back, and before his half-drunken comrades could realize what had transpired, and close in upon him, Harry had leaped upon the rail, and with a laugh of defiance sprang overboard.

He was a most excellent swimmer, and fearing his enemies might fire a stray bullet at him, he at first swam under water.

When he arose to the surface at some distance from the ship, the boat containing his companions was near, and with a few lusty strokes he gained its side.

The old sailor stood waiting to receive him, and with his powerful arms he pulled him into the boat.

"Well done, my lad!" said he. "We're well clear of those varmint, at last."

But their troubles were by no means yet ended. The mutineers had now become thoroughly alarmed. To their distorted fancies, it seemed that the runaways, if they succeeded in escaping, would surely put the law upon their track.

Jack Bowline had recovered his wits, and, though still unsteady on his pins, was yet sailor enough to act promptly.

"Up with the wheel, lads, and stand by to tend braces as she comes 'round!" he commanded. "Them chaps must be captured, dead or alive. It's as much as our necks is worth to let 'em go."

The ship began to wear 'round until her head lay toward the fugitives.

"I'm afeard we hain't done with them sea-sarpints yet," muttered Bill Travis, as he saw the vessel move. "Now they've got well-primed with liquor, they're ready for anything. Howsumever, they sha'n't ketch us if I can help it. I'd rather see us all go to the bottom together than step on the deck of that old craft ag'in."

"I'd prefer to do neither," remarked Harry, "and I fancy they'll find themselves out in their

calculations. How far do you suppose we are out from shore?"

"Five miles, I should judge."

"Then, with this breeze we ought to make it in a couple of hours?"

"About that, I should say—provided they don't put a stopper on us afore that time."

"Certainly. Then we have only to dodge them as best we can, still keeping our head to the land?"

"That's about it."

"Well, we'll see. Hello, what's this?" he added, as his foot struck against something hard in the bottom of the boat.

"That's poor Tom Lawler's rifle that he sot such a store by," replied the old sailor. "I thought mebbe we might need it; so, as we had as much right to it as anybody, I fetched it along, together with the ammunition for it."

Harry picked it up and examined it carefully. It was already loaded.

"Good!" he remarked; "this is better than a pistol at long range. I don't want to shoot anybody, but if them fellows persist in following us, some of them will get hurt."

By this time the ship was slowly beginning to get headway in pursuit, though still at some distance off.

Old Bill Travis seizing an oar ordered the darky to do the same, and began pulling with all his might, remarking: "There's mast and sails with us, if we could spare time to ship 'em."

"I'll soon do that!" answered Harry, as he proceeded to the task.

Harry kept a sharp eye upon the movements of his pursuers, while at the same time he busied himself in stepping the mast. The sail was already bent and lashed to it, just as it had been when last used. With nimble fingers he undid the lashings and cast it loose to the breeze. Fortunately, everything about it was found to be in working order.

The ship by this time had decreased the distance between them nearly one-half, but since the setting of the sail, the big craft had gained on the fugitives far less rapidly.

Already the mutineers had begun firing their pistols upon the occupants of the boat, but, owing to their unsteady aim, had as yet done no harm. Still the balls began to whistle in unpleasant proximity.

"They will hit us by accident yet," remarked Harry, as he picked up the rifle and glanced along the barrel.

The crew could be plainly seen gathered in a crowd on the forecastle. At this moment a bullet whistled so close to the old sailor that he involuntarily ducked.

"That settles it!" muttered the lad, with an air of determination; and raising the rifle to his shoulder, he took quick aim and fired.

"A good shot!" exclaimed old Bill, as a howl of rage reached their ears.

Then they saw the crowd hurriedly scatter and get out of sight.

"I wonder what *that* means?" queried Harry, as they saw the ship slowly round to her old course.

"I reckon they've given us up as a bad job," and the old sailor gave a grim chuckle. "I s'pose the varmint have come to the conclusion at last that they will have plenty chance to get away long afore we can get back to the States and report 'em. If they hadn't been so drunk they might hev thought about that long ago."

The old sailor's surmise was probably correct, as the ship once more headed on her old course, and soon began to slowly disappear in the distance.

It was more than two hours, though, before the boat succeeded in reaching the shore. All three were worn out with the excitement they had passed through. First securing the boat so that it could not drift away, they next proceeded to unload their valuables.

Seeing no signs of human life or habitation near them, and fearing no danger, they threw themselves

wearily upon the ground and were soon soundly sleeping.

They awoke, suddenly, with a fierce yell ringing in their ears. Fully a score of naked, painted savages, armed with spears, surrounded them.

"Hello!" growled the old sailor, rubbing his eyes; "our troubles ain't ended yet, it seems. Them var-mints look as if they might be as bad as the crowd we've just left."

"I guess we won't find them as hard to deal with, Bill," replied Harry. "Leave everything to me, now. I've a plan in my head that I think will work nicely. If I don't show these heathen a trick or two that will teach them to handle us carefully, then they are welcome to eat me. Whatever happens we must manage to keep their paws off my magic chest and I'll answer for the rest of it."

The savages, jabbering noisily, were closing in upon them.

"Just watch me now," said Harry, as placidly as if he was addressing an audience at home. "In about a minute you'll see fun that is fun, or else you can set me down as no magician."

CHAPTER V.

IN THE HANDS OF SAVAGES—WHAT CURIOSITY DID FOR ONE OF THEM—A LUCKY SHOT—THE MAGIC CHEST RECOVERED—THE BOY MAGICIAN SEES HIS ADVANTAGE.

The old sailor was not disposed to take matters so quietly.

"Blast my toplights, Harry, we can scatter this crowd in just about two seconds! For all we know these fellows may be cannibals, and I for one don't like the idea of being made prisoner. Just drop the chief yonder, with a bullet, and if that ain't enough give 'em more. My revolver is loaded, so you and I are good for fourteen of 'em at least."

"Wait, Bill!" was the quiet reply. "The easiest plan is the best in this case. Ten to one their spears are poisoned, and we would be pretty apt to get a taste of them before we were through. Leave this business to me, and if I fail in getting on the right side of them it will be time enough to fight afterward."

"Jest as you say, my lad!" assented the old sailor, resignedly. "Shiver my timbers though, if I fancy the notion of my old hulk being used to furnish them critters with a square meal."

Even Snowball assumed an air of courage when he saw that the savages were of his own color.

"Dey's noffin' but a passel of poah niggahs," said he, contemptuously. "Dar's no fight in sich trash as dem!"

Bosun, the dog, seemed to realize the aspect of affairs. Fixing his eye upon the leader of the savages he gave vent to a sullen growl.

"Down, Bosun!" commanded Harry, sternly, and as the faithful animal obeyed, he walked forward toward the chief, holding both hands crossed over his breast in token of peace.

It seemed to be understood, for the chief uttered a few guttural words and his followers lowered the points of their weapons.

Then by signs the chief intimated to the party that they must prepare to accompany them inland.

Harry nodded his head in acquiescence, at the same time pointing to their effects to convey to the minds of the savages the fact that they were also to be taken with them.

The bag of gold Harry had placed in the cutter at the time it was loaded.

It was fortunate for him that he did so, else the leap he was afterward compelled to make into the sea might have imperiled his life. On taking it from the cutter, when reaching the shore, he had dug a shallow hole and buried it so that at least it was safe for the present.

But, although the effects were to go with the party, Harry was dismayed to see that the savages

intended to appropriate them. At a signal from their chief they began gathering up the articles.

Two of them picked up the magic chest and started ahead. Another seized the rifle, a really valuable one, and which Harry did not like to lose.

The savages, satisfied with the declaration of peace, and confident in their superiority of numbers had made no attempt to secure or bind their captives, so they all plodded on in a long file. The sun had come out in blazing fierceness and the party had traveled as near as they could judge between three and four miles.

Harry had cautioned the sailor from the start to get his bearings, keeping in view the probability of a return, at some time.

By this time they caught sight of a collection of grass huts, in all probability the home of their captors.

The two savages who were carrying the magic chest were perspiring freely, for it was no light burden. Close behind them walked the fellow who had appropriated the gun. Evidently the weapon was unknown among them, for they turned it this way and that, with looks of curiosity. At last one fellow discovered the fact that the hammer was movable.

Holding the piece with the butt resting against his stomach, he exerted his strength to draw back the hammer.

A grin of delight ran over the face of the sailor lad as he noted the movement and nudged the old sailor behind him.

The savage succeeded far beyond his expectations. Suddenly the hammer slipped from his fingers; there was a loud report and he went sprawling backward on the grass, holding both hands on his stomach with a roar of terror.

The recoil of the piece had nearly knocked the wind out of him. Nor was this all; one of the savages who carried the chest suddenly dropped his burden. Clapping his hands on the rear of his person he uttered a diabolical yell and darted off as if the fiends were after him. The rest of the heathens were nearly as badly frightened, and with one accord they dropped their several bundles and took to their heels. Even the chief, evidently the bravest of the lot, was nearly as panic-stricken as the rest.

Harry laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks, so ridiculous was the scene, while the old sailor was so amused that he forgot his fears for the moment. The face of the little darky was distended in a broad grin.

The explanation of it all was simple enough. The savage who carried the gun had held the muzzle in a line with the flank of the fellow ahead of him. Luckily the rifle-bullet had taken a slanting direction through the fleshy part of the victim's anatomy. It had gone clear through, making a ragged hole but doing no serious injury, as they afterward learned.

The incident was a most reassuring one to Harry, as it showed the fact that the barbarians in whose hands they had fallen were unacquainted with the nature of firearms.

The chief was the first to recover his wits, but not one among the black-skins would venture to pick up the terrible weapon. In vain he stormed and threatened, but Harry cut short the quarrel by picking up the rifle himself, and motioned his captors to go ahead.

They had gone but a few steps, however, before a new surprise awaited them. The savage hiss of a serpent was heard within the magic chest! and the men who were carrying it let it fall with a crash.

"Confound the brutes!" exclaimed Harry, with some alarm; "it's a fortunate thing for us that their stupidity didn't send us all to kingdom come!"

"What in the name of Nimrod have you got in it, anyhow?" asked Bill Travis, in surprise.

"Well, there's a matter of a pound or so of nitro-glycerine, in the first place; then there's my chemicals and magic apparatus, with perhaps a live snake

or two by way of variety." And as he ceased speaking, the hiss of the serpent was once more heard.

The savages had drawn off to a respectable distance and stood eying the chest in trepidation; then, gathering in a group, they began to jabber noisily as if in consultation over the best plan to be pursued.

Still at intervals came that warning hiss.

Stepping forward with the eyes of his captors fixed upon his every movement, Harry stooped down and made a few mysterious passes over the chest. Almost instantly the hissing ceased.

"Now then, Bill," he remarked, as he seized one of the handles, "take the other end and we'll forge ahead again. I guess these chaps will be willing to leave us in possession now."

But the old sailor showed little inclination to accept the offer.

"I don't mind sea-sarpints, lad," he remarked, "for they generally mind thar own business, but this chap might make his way out and tackle a fellow."

"I'll take good care of that," assured Harry, with a grin. "The chest is locked, in the first place, and I never heard of a snake gnawing his way through a half-inch of solid oak."

Thus reassured Bill picked up his end and they once more resumed their journey. Harry was not slow to note the fact that the savages were regarding him with an air of respect and admiration.

"We've got the upper hand of them now, Bill. So long as I can keep this thing a-going we will be safe from harm, at least. If I'm not very much mistaken, they will be anxious enough to get rid of us before long. There's lots of fun in prospect, and I'll show them something that will make them open their eyes before we've been with them many days."

CHAPTER VI.

OLD SPINDLE-SHANKS GETS A SCARE—A JOKE ON THE SAILOR—BROUGHT BEFORE THE CHIEF—HARRY PERFORMS A STARTLING FEAT—THE SAVAGES TERROR-STRICKEN.

Under other conditions, even old Bill Travis might have been alarmed at the wonderful feats he afterward witnessed performed by the lad, for sailors as a rule are inclined to superstition.

His proficiency in the magic art had given him the title of the Boy Magician even while at school, and the appellation seemed to have been most fittingly chosen.

The fellow who had been wounded had run straight to the village and informed the tribe of the wonderful things that had transpired. Hence, as the party neared the collection of huts that served as dwellings they were met by a number of savages who eyed the captives curiously.

Wonder and fear were plainly visible upon their shining faces. It gave way to one of respect and awe as they jabbered with those who had made the capture. Their eyes rested alternately upon Harry and the mysterious box.

One of their number, a tall, lanky individual whom Harry dubbed Spindle-shanks on the spot, eyed the sailor boy with more than ordinary curiosity. Around his loins was an elaborate cloth, trimmed with gay-colored feathers. From his appearance and manner he seemed to be a person of importance in the tribe. His face alone of all the number wore a look of contempt which excited the lad's anger.

On entering the village the captives were conducted to a hut and left alone.

Soon afterward a quantity of food, consisting mostly of fruits, was brought to them. Due precautions, however, had been taken to guard against their captives' escape. Two savages, armed with spears, stood watch outside the hut.

As it approached noon and the fierce sun began to shoot its scorching rays direct from overhead, most

of the tribe retired to their quarters and took their noon-day nap. Left to themselves Harry's first move was to unlock the chest.

The old sailor, on noting this, backed off to the furthest corner of the hut.

"I wish you'd throttle that sarpint, my lad," said he, earnestly.

"There's no snake here," replied the lad, with a laugh.

"Can't I believe my own ears?"

"Come and see for yourself."

The old sailor approached the chest carefully. He was within a few feet of it when the angry hiss was again heard.

Stepping hurriedly back he exclaimed:

"This hut ain't big enough for that sarpint and I," and he moved toward the entrance.

"That chap outside will give you a taste of his spear," warned the lad.

"I'd rather have that than a snake-bite."

"Nonsense, Bill!" said the young master of magic, resuming his quiet voice. "I'll give you my word that there's no snake in the box, nor ever has been. I am the serpent!"

The old sailor resumed his seat with a petulant air.

"The next time you want to joke I wish you'd pick out some one else," he remarked.

Opening the chest, Harry selected a number of articles and secreted them about his person for future use. Then he carefully relocked it.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, several savages entered the hut and motioned for Harry to follow them.

The old sailor and the little darky also arose, but they were warned back with threatening gestures.

"It's all right, I guess," remarked Harry reassuringly; "I can take care of myself for awhile, and these heathens, too, I fancy."

Bosun rose lazily to his feet and trotted beside his young master. No objection seemed to be made to this arrangement, for he was unmolested.

The savages, however, took good care to keep their distance from both the brute and his master, and, walking ahead, they conducted him into the presence of the chief, who was seated upon a sort of raised platform, elaborately adorned with shells and feathers. At his side stood the individual who had been designated as Spindle-shanks. He scowled fiercely at the young American, and muttered a few words audible to the chief only. The latter turned to another savage and motioned him to step forward.

"Me talkee white man," remarked the fellow with an air of pride. "Where comee?"

"That's heavy English, I must say," answered Harry, with a grin. "Many miles," he replied, pointing in the direction of the sea.

The savage interpreted the words to his chief, then turning again to the lad, he demanded: "Snakee what for?"

An amused look swept across the face of the Boy Magician, who saw that the savages were wondering why he carried a snake with him.

Moving his hands over his head and around his body with a gliding motion he conveyed the intimation that he was a snake-charmer; and as he did so, he noticed that the face of old Spindle-shanks assumed an expression of relief.

Once more the interpreter spoke:

"Chief wantee see;—Voodoo white man show chief."

Now, as the box in question contained no snake, Harry was of course unable to gratify their wishes in this respect.

"The snake is asleep just now, old fellow, and must not be disturbed. However, I'll show you something better, in a moment."

Stooping down he picked up a few dry sticks and placed them in a pile. The savages huddling around him were closely watching the proceedings. His next move was to produce a friction match and strike a light. Even the match was a novelty to

them, for they sprung back as they saw the flame suddenly shoot from the end of the harmless-looking splinter of wood.

Old Spindle-shanks was watching every move with a look of undisguised hatred. Harry rightly guessed that he was fearful of losing his power through the greater skill of the youthful white sorcerer.

Watching every move, though apparently absorbed in the work he was performing, the lad began slowly walking around the circle, occasionally spreading his hands toward the fire. Every time he did so a blue flame shot up in the air, and at every repetition of this the savages sprung back with a grunt of alarm.

But their curiosity was too great for their fear, and they now crowded as near as they dared, leaving an opening in their ranks toward the chief so that his view was unobstructed.

At last Harry paused, and standing with his face to the chief he took out his penknife and made a slight incision around his wrists; then uttering a few words of gibberish he stooped down and thrust his hands in the fire.

When he held them up they were in a blaze!

With a quick motion he stripped off the skin and held it up to view, and as he did so they could plainly see the holes where the nails had been left. Holding them up until they were nearly consumed he dropped both skins into the fire.

The savages stood spellbound at the sight, until the lad advanced toward the chief, holding up his raw, bloody hands, when, with one cry of terror, they all broke and ran in every direction.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OLD SAILOR ON DECK—THE MYSTERY SOLVED—SPINDLE-SHANKS SHOWS HIS SKILL—SOMETHING NOT DOWN ON THE PROGRAMME—A GENUINE SURPRISE.

THE cry of terror that broke from the lips of the frightened savages had alarmed the guard left to watch over Harry's companions, so they came rushing to the spot to discover the cause of the commotion.

The old sailor was also startled at the sound of that infernal yell. To his excited mind came the thought that Harry had fallen into some peril; perhaps the tribe were about to take his life and the yell was one of delight as they executed their war-dance over him!

"Come, Snowball," he said, giving a revolver to the little ducky and at the same time producing his own; "boarders away now, woolly-head! We must fight these infernal land-pirates to the death!" and he led the way breathlessly toward the spot where Harry was standing.

The lad was once more surrounded by a crowd, for the savages had recovered their wits.

Harry was quick to see that the old sailor was ready for a struggle, but putting up his hand warningly he cried:

"Don't shoot, Bill; there's no harm done. Just stand by and look on for a few minutes. I've been showing these chaps a new trick. Now mind, no matter what I do you must seem to take it all as a matter of course, and before I'm through you'll see a first-rate performance and no charge."

The savages had once more formed a crowded half-circle around the American boy. The old sailor finding himself unceremoniously crowded out, coolly set himself down on the grass, at the foot of the chief's platform, and motioned the little ducky to a place beside him. As for the dog he kept close beside his young master as if to protect him.

Old Spindle-shanks had once more resumed his post at the side of his chief, but his manner belied the looks of indifference he tried to assume. As he whispered a few words to the chief the latter repeated them to his interpreter.

"Him say him do better," explained the latter to Harry.

"What a lying old scoundrel!" said the boy, aloud. "Never mind, Bill; I'll make him take water yet before I have finished with him."

Then calling for a calabash of water, he washed his hands and held them up for inspection. The skin was as clear and free from injury as it had ever been. At which an exclamation of awe fell from the lips of the tribe. It was evident their respect for the white sorcerer was greatly augmented by what they had seen.

Yet the explanation was simple enough. He had, while in his hut, prepared himself for this feat. First staining his hands with a red solution, he had drawn on a pair of tight-fitting, flesh-colored kids, from which the parts covering the finger-nails had been carefully cut out. Then he covered them with a chemical preparation which, though burning readily, produced but little heat. The incision around the wrists, of course, was imaginary, to give a more realistic effect. He was shrewd enough to leave no chance for detection by dropping the last remnants of the trick in the fire, and was now ready for another exhibition of his powers.

Bowing respectfully to the chief, he once more stepped forward, holding in his hand a small box filled with black powder. Taking a small pinch of this between his thumb and forefinger he applied it to his nostrils. As he did so, his keen eye was closely watching the face of his enemy. The effect of the powder, so far as the sorcerer was concerned, was perfectly harmless.

He now passed the box over to the interpreter with the remark—"Tell your medicine-man to do as I did, if he dares!"

The old sailor's face began to expand in a broad grin. He saw in a moment what was to be the result.

As for old Spindle-shanks, he looked disgusted at the simplicity of the request. Surely, if the white boy could do that with impunity, he had nothing to dread from following his example; so, with an air of supreme contempt, he reached for the box, and taking a huge pinch of the mixture in his fingers, he applied it vigorously to his flat, black nose.

In a moment the tears forced themselves from his eyes, followed by a vigorous sneeze that nearly jerked his head from his shoulders.

The harmless-looking powder was really the strongest of Scotch snuff.

"A-tchu! A-tchu!" he gasped, sneezing violently, while the tears rained down his bony face.

The rest of the savages, and particularly the old chief, looked on with an amused smile.

"I guess he will know what snuff is the next time he sees it," grinned the old sailor in delight.

It was some time before old Spindle-shanks succeeded in recovering his tranquillity; but a most diabolical scowl had settled upon his homely features. Uttering a few guttural exclamations to one of his men, who hurried away, he now strode forward to the open space before the chief.

"I guess I've succeeded in stirring up the animals at last!" coolly remarked the young magician.

The next words of the interpreter showed that he had divined truly.

"Medicine-man now show white man!" said the savage.

"All right, old sooty-face! I'm ready to take it all in. Go ahead with the exhibition!" So saying he made his way to a seat beside his companions and prepared to enjoy the scene.

The sable messenger soon returned with a small basket which he placed bottom up on the grass before the medicine-man.

Snatching a two-year-old young one from the arms of one of the women present, the medicine-man placed it beneath this basket. Then producing a long, keen-pointed lance, he began waltzing around the basket, at the same time uttering a rude chant. Gradually working himself up into real or simulated frenzy, he suddenly stopped and thrust the keen-edged weapon through the side of the basket.

There was a cry from within as of a child in mortal pain. Again and again was the keen lance driven through the wicker-work. The bright blade was now dyed crimson, and the moans were growing less loud.

All was still, now, within the basket, and suddenly raising it the medicine-man revealed to view the apparently lifeless and bloody corpse of the child.

Every eye was fixed upon his movements in eager intensity. With a triumphant air the medicine-man once more replaced the basket in its original position; once more he resumed his march around it, repeating his incantations, and making mysterious movements with his hands, at the same time.

For fully five minutes he kept this up, without intermission; then, with a triumphant air, he reraised the basket.

Harry bit his lips to repress an exclamation of wonder.

There sat the urchin, alive and unharmed, as he had first seen him!

Nor was there as much as a scratch or mark of blood upon the little nig as he was passed back to his maternal charge with an air of unconcern.

"I rather think I have a bigger job marked out for me than I calculated on," remarked Harry to the old sailor in an undertone. "Old Spindle-shanks isn't as big a fool as he looks. I must manage to get the secret of that trick out of him, somehow, before we leave. It beats anything I ever saw Heller do."

"Well, it beats me entirely," responded old Bill, bluntly. "Anyhow, a fellow can't believe his own eyes when you magicians get to work. They used to say the magicians were in league with the devil, and I believe they are."

"It will do no harm for you to keep on thinking so," averred Harry, with a smile, as he just then saw an opportunity to give old Spindle-shanks another scare which it is needless to say he was not slow to avail himself of.

The basket still stood inverted upon the ground close beside where the medicine-man was standing, with a look of grim satisfaction upon his ugly visage. He seemed to feel that he had, in a great measure, counteracted the rising popularity of his youthful competitor. Apparently he had no further use for the basket, for he motioned to his attendant to remove it.

But, suddenly, he started back with a look of consternation. From beneath the basket came the shrill cry of a child in pain, exactly as they had heard it but a short time before.

The medicine-man was dumfounded, and stared at the mother holding the child as if to satisfy himself that he was not mistaken.

But again that plaintive cry from beneath the basket.

For a moment the medicine-man stood petrified with wonder; then, summoning all his courage, he cautiously approached the basket and raised it from the ground.

Wonder, fear, and astonishment were equally blended in his countenance:—nothing was there! He struck the basket as it yet sat on the ground to assure his companions that it was really empty and then passed it to his assistant, who disappeared instantly, but the sailor boy noticed that he did not once hold it so that the interior could be seen.

This fact assured him that the secret of the trick was in the basket itself, and he determined to examine the article at the first favorable opportunity.

But the mystery of that last cry was still uppermost in the mind of the savage.

CHAPTER VIII.

A TRICK WORTH TWO OF IT—ANOTHER BAD SCARE—THE ATTACK AT MIDNIGHT—TURNING THE TABLES—WHAT THE VIAL CONTAINED.

OLD BILL, ignorant of the secret, was as much dum-

founded as any of them, while an amused smile rested about the corners of Harry's mouth. It was hard for him to look at the face of Spindle-shanks and still retain his gravity; but it was very necessary for the success of his plans that he should now utterly rout his rival. For it was quite possible that the latter had some still more wonderful exhibition of his powers to bring out.

Harry determined to meet him trick for trick and thus keep the advantage he had already gained; so stepping forward once more he drew from his pocket several papers which he passed around for inspection; but the savages, bearing in mind the effects of the snuff, handled them gingerly and seemed relieved when they were rid of them again.

They stood huddled in a group awaiting his next move.

The fire that Harry had first kindled was yet alive. Kicking aside the embers, the lad threw the several packages upon them.

As the fire touched them they suddenly darted in every direction over the ground with a hissing sound. In vain the barbarians strove to dodge them. It seemed as if the fiery serpents were endowed with life, so quick and erratic were their movements.

With one accord the sable audience rushed pell-mell from the spot. Even old Spindle-shanks himself exhibited as much agility as any of them in getting away to safer quarters.

The Boy Magician and his companions were left alone with the chief, who though as much alarmed as his followers still held his ground, but with a startled look upon his features.

The packages which had caused such a stampede were in reality what is known to our boy readers as "chasers."

Making a low obeisance of respect to the chief, Harry once more stood before him with folded arms.

It soon became evident that the chief had seen enough for one day, for he peremptorily motioned his captives to retire to their quarters, which the trio proceeded to do, well satisfied with the prestige which their young master's feats had won.

Once more in their tent Harry first assured himself that his precious box had not been tampered with during his absence; then he busied himself in getting out such articles as he would need in a new plan he had already formed.

Toward evening another bountiful supply of food was set before them. Nor was there any mistaking the respectful manner of the savages left on guard over their hut.

After supper the old sailor produced his pipe and indulged in a smoke.

All were pretty well tired out, and as Harry seemed little inclined to talk, his companions laid down on the mats provided, and were soon asleep.

For a long time the young master of necromancy remained awake, gazing out of the open door. A presentiment of danger stole over him, and, strive as he would, he could not shake off the uncomfortable sensation.

His revolver he carefully examined to see that it was ready for service.

It was fully midnight before he could compose himself for sleep. The faithful dog was lying by his side. He was just dropping off into a troubled doze when a movement of the dog awakened him.

Listening intently he heard a peculiar, stealthy sound outside.

He was now thoroughly awake and on his guard. "Quiet, Bosun!" he whispered, as he laid a restraining hand upon the animal, who ceased his low growl and remained motionless, with his great eyes fastened upon his master's face.

Harry now observed that a corner of the matting which formed the sides of the hut was being slowly raised. This act was shortly followed by the stealthy entrance of a human head. The moonlight through the open door fell upon it in such a way that he was enabled to recognize the features.

As he had surmised, it was the medicine-man! Still lying motionless, the lad awaited the next move. His sharp eyes caught the glitter of a weapon.

No doubt, then, the black wizard had come prepared to murder the youth with whose skill he felt unable to compete.

Harry's fingers closed over his revolver. It would have been an easy matter to have shot the assassin on the spot, and so at once rid himself of his enemy forever, but Harry preferred to wait. He had determined to defend himself in another way, and at the same time teach his enemy a lesson he would not soon forget.

Noiselessly drawing a cloth from his pocket, he turned his face away in the darkness, and passed the cloth several times over it. Then he cautiously loosened the stopper of a small vial and held it concealed in his hand.

The savage had now fully entered the quiet hut, and seemed satisfied that his enemy was soundly sleeping.

Harry had laid aside the revolver, and his hand was pressed over the dog's eyes.

The brute was as silent as if dead.

On hands and knees, now, with the stealthiness of a cat, the would-be assassin worked his way to the side of his victim. His black fingers were lightly passed over the lad's breast, as if to mark the best spot to strike; then the knife was raised for the fatal thrust.

At that instant the face of the Boy Magician, luminous with light, was turned full upon him!

A cry of terror broke from the medicine-man at the sight, and the upraised weapon dropped from his nerveless fingers.

Half mad with terror he sprung to his feet to fly from that awful presence, but he was not destined to escape so easily.

Letting fly his fist, Harry struck his enemy a blow that sent him reeling.

The noise of the struggle awakened the old sailor who instantly jumped to the rescue.

"Keep back, Bill!" ordered the lad, coolly; "I can take care of this imp of Satan alone!"

As he spoke he hit the fellow squarely between the eyes a blow that sent him sprawling upon his back; then stooping over his half-stunned enemy, he managed to drop some of the contents of his vial between the breech-clout and hide of the medicine-man; and jerking him to his feet he sent him flying from the tent by a well-directed kick and push.

Old Spindle-shanks hurried off with a cry of pain, at the same time scratching his haunches with terrible vigor. He acted as if he had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

The guards outside, believing that the occupants of the tent had been the cause of this strange proceeding, made a rush for the captives; but, as the flaming face of the white sorcerer confronted them, they rushed back as hastily as they had advanced, and left their prisoners wholly unguarded.

Harry laughed unrestrainedly, as he exclaimed:

"That's what I call coming to the scratch with a vengeance. I guess by the time that old Spindle-shanks gets that cow-itch out of his breeches, he will make up his mind that I'm a bad crowd to fool with. But it was a close call for me, and if it hadn't been for 'Bosun' I don't know but what he might have succeeded in the job he laid out. Ha! ha! ha! I'll never forget the way his eyes stuck out when he saw my face with the phosphorus on it. It was as good as a dream of horror!"

CHAPTER IX.

A LAUGHABLE REVENGE—AN ALARM IN CAMP—THE BOY MAGICIAN AS A LEADER—A NEW METHOD OF ASSAULT—THE ATTACK.

It was evident that the medicine-man was a thor-

oughly frightened individual. The cow-itch that Harry had so deftly inserted beneath his waist-cloth, stung him like a swarm of hornets. In vain he fought and scratched with all his vigor. His efforts only served to spread and increase the intolerable itching.

Harry and his companions stood in the door of their hut, enjoying the scene to their heart's content.

"Just look at the old snoozer," laughed the lad. "Any one would think he had 'bugs,' by the way he acts."

"Guess he'll think twice afore he tries to run foul of you again, my lad," was old Bill's opinion.

"I hope so. At any rate, we are safe enough for the rest of this night, so I'll just rub this phosphorus off my face and go to sleep."

"Ay, ay; go to sleep now as soon as you please, but I've had such a shaking-up that I can't sleep, so I'll take the deck until morning, and if I see any signs of squally weather, I'll call all hands in a jiffy."

"All right!" responded Harry, and throwing himself down on his mat, he was soon soundly sleeping, and the little darky soon followed his example.

Left to himself, the old sailor produced his pipe to indulge in a quiet smoke; but the rest of the night passed without further incident. Just about day-break, however, old Bill noticed a sudden commotion among the savages. They were rushing around in every direction, shouting and shaking their spears fiercely. It looked as if a first-class row of some kind was in prospect.

"That infernal Spindle-shanks is up to some new game, I fancy," the old sailor concluded. "If I ever lay my paws on the scarpint ag'in I'll bet he'll do no more mischief in this world."

The hubbub had awakened the lad who was a light sleeper, and old Bill stated his fears, walked to the door of the hut and looked out.

The guards were still there; but their manner was uneasy and anxious.

"I think," announced Harry, "that there is some danger threatening these niggers from outside. Hallo, here comes the interpreter on a run! Now we'll soon find out what the row is about."

The darky soon entered the hut.

"Chief want white sorcerer!" said he, breathlessly.

"What for?"

"Cetywango men come; make big fight!"

"What has all that got to do with me?" demanded the American boy.

"Chief say white sorcerer come with tribe; kill Cetywango men much big! Come!"

Harry smiled. "That's cool upon my word. They propose to set me up in the butcher business, eh?" but going to his magic chest he selected a number of articles to be used in case a battle should really take place.

"Come, Bill," he said, "we are in for it this time, it seems. Get your shooting-irons in readiness and come along. Snowball and the dog will stay where they are to keep watch over our effects. Remember though," he added, addressing the little nig, "you are to keep out of trouble if it can possibly be avoided; but in case you should be attacked, shoot the first man who tries to lay hands on you!"

Following the lead of the interpreter, the young American and his companion were conducted to where the old chief was standing, when through his interpreter he managed to hastily acquaint his captives with the source of the trouble.

Harry listened attentively and managed to guess somewhere near the truth. Nearly an hour previous, the guards had brought the information that their old enemies were stealthily advancing upon them with a strong force. Their method of advance would seem to show that they calculated upon making the attack by surprise.

Harry glanced around him and his eyes at once took in the situation. The collection of huts which

constituted the village stood upon slightly raised ground. From the direction in which the enemy were approaching it was evident they would have to cross an open space before reaching them. Here they would be in full view. To the right of this space was a small clump of trees and shrubbery.

Marking the nature of the battle-ground, Harry was soon ready to lay the plan in which he hoped to be successful. The savages were eagerly watching him in the meanwhile.

The old chief, too, looked expectant, and the lad saw it was expected of him to take command.

"I don't much like this racket, Bill," said he, in an undertone. "There's no knowing but what the enemy may be two to one. In case our side gets the worst of it, they will probably show their gratitude by wringing our necks for us."

"Never mind; we can't get out of it, so do the best you can and I'll help for all I'm worth. Scare the wits out of the enemy at the start, if you can. If you can frighten a man he is more than half licked on the start."

"It is our only hope, I suppose," replied the lad.

Then addressing the chief, through the interpreter, he ordered him to send half his force and conceal them in the clump of trees before spoken of.

They were instructed not to move from their position, under any pretext, until he gave the signal by waving his hand over his head. The rest of the tribe were drawn up in warlike array where they would be in full sight of the attacking party.

Presently a low murmur arose from the lips of those around him. Looking up quickly, the Boy Magician saw the enemy appear in view. They were a splendid-looking lot of savages, and well-armed. In point of numbers, too, they were superior to his own force.

Very calmly he stood with his arms resting upon his weapon, waiting for the decisive moment.

The attacking party saw that they had failed to catch their enemy napping, yet they moved steadily onward.

They were not more than a hundred yards distant when the Boy Magician suddenly strode forward.

With a warning gesture he waved them back.

The enemy seemed astounded at seeing a white man at that time, and stood still for a moment.

"Keep back, you black rascals, if you don't want to get hurt," said Harry, forgetting for a moment that they would not understand his words. "The White Spirit commands you to return!"

"White man no scare us," spoke up one of the party in broken English. Then turning to his leader he whispered a few words in his ear.

The next moment a shower of arrows flew through the air, and with loud yells of defiance, the enemy moved on.

Bringing his rifle to his shoulder, Harry took quick aim and fired. The savage who had spoken English fell lifeless; but, undismayed by this, his companions came steadily on.

"I guess these chaps have seen firearms before to-day, Bill," remarked Harry, coolly. "At any rate they haven't got any themselves. Just empty your revolver in the crowd while I give them a lesson that they will not forget in a hurry."

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the response, as the old sailor blazed away.

Meanwhile Harry drew from his pocket a small tin case, and holding it in his hand started on a run toward the enemy. When within thirty yards of them he suddenly stopped.

The enemy, surprised at this queer action, forgot to use their weapons upon him. With all the force of his muscular arm he hurled the missile in their midst! In an instant an explosion ensued which shook the ground. As the smoke cleared away, fully a score of dead and dying savages were seen stretched upon the ground.

Very effective indeed had been that small but terrible implement of death. Panic-stricken, the enemy broke and fled.

"Now is our time," remarked the lad, quietly, as he raised his hands over his head as a signal to the ambushed party.

With a yell, they sprung from their covert to intercept the retreat of their flying enemies, while at the same time the chief and his followers joined in the pursuit.

"I guess we'll let them fight it out on their own hook now," remarked the lad to his companion. "They surely won't be able to find fault with our share of the work. There's half of my stock of nitro-glycerine gone though."

"Half!" grunted the old sailor; "well, I wish you had used it all. Suppose the rest of it should explode in the chest, what would become of us?"

"Give it up, Bill; you must give me an easier one next time. Look how those savages run!"

It was a desperate conflict that was waged for the next half-hour, and it was plainly visible from the point where the young magician-warrior stood.

CHAPTER X.

AN UNEVEN EXCHANGE—THE OLD SAILOR'S DISCOVERY—THE BOY MAGICIAN GAINS A PRIZE—IMPORTANT NEWS.

At length the sanguinary battle was ended and the savages began to return to the village, with their chief in the lead. The latter approached the spot where Harry was standing. Placing both arms around the lad's neck, he rubbed noses!

"That means we are friends," explained Harry to the old sailor.

In confirmation of his words the interpreter now stepped forward and said:

"White sorcerer medicine-man now; chief say so. Have many wives so long as he live!"

"They're going to make a Mormon of me, Bill! I'll give you a share of my wives if I have more than I can manage," and Harry seemed much to enjoy the situation.

"Better steer clear of that kind of craft, my lad. One woman is more than a man can manage sometimes, let alone a dozen."

"Well," laughed Harry, "on the whole I think I'd rather be excused; in fact, I'd prefer making a selection among those of my own color."

But the chief had not yet finished. Stepping forward, he selected a large pebble from a small bag suspended from a belt around his waist. This stone he presented gravely to the boy.

"I suppose the old duffer means to show his gratitude still further," remarked Harry, as he took the proffered stone. "I suppose this is to be worn as a charm, or something of that kind, seeing that he sets such store by it."

Receiving it as gravely as it had been tendered, he in turn drew from his pocket the elegant gold watch which he carried, and presented it to the chief.

"It's a regular one-sided bargain, Bill," he remarked to his friend. "I never made a poorer trade in my life; but, I must do something to cement the friendship he is so ready to show."

The chief eyed his new acquisition with unfeigned delight. As to its use he knew no more than of Church History; but the beauty of the delicate mechanism ticking away in his hand captivated him completely.

While the old dark was thus occupied in admiring his gift, Harry was curiously turning over in his hand the pebble he had received.

"I wonder what makes them put such an absurd value on a piece of quartz?" he remarked, musingly, as he passed it over to his companion for inspection. "I should say it must be a rather scarce article in this country."

The old sailor examined it critically for a moment.

"Great guns!" he suddenly ejaculated.

"Well, what's struck you now, Bill?"

"I didn't know you was so green, my lad. There's something I can learn you yet, it seems, for all you're so smart with your tricks."

"Well, what is it?"

"You've made the best trade of your life, that's all. Don't you really know what that pebble is?"

"Quartz, I suppose."

"A rough diamond, my lad, and a beauty 'twill turn out when it's cut, or I'm a lubber. An old sailor like me hain't traveled all over the world for nothing. I've seen 'em in Brazil, and once run across some on the south coast of Africa, but they were small stones."

The lad's eyes beamed with delight as he heard the news.

"I've read of diamonds having been lately discovered in Africa," he exclaimed, "and since the old chief has a number of them left in that bag, I should judge we must be somewhere near the place where they are found. I'll proceed to ingratiate myself in the good opinion of this old snaky-face, and possibly he will open his heart enough to reveal us the secret."

At this moment they were startled by a shout from below. Looking down they saw a number of savages returning with a group of prisoners, all women.

"There comes the spoils of war, I suppose," remarked Harry. "Suppose we go and meet them, and see what kind of cattle they've got in tow?"

As the two walked away, arm in arm, the approaching savages greeted them with a cry of pleasure. They pointed triumphantly to their capture, and evidently realized that their late victory was due solely to the marvelous skill of the white sorcerer.

Suddenly Harry uttered a cry of mingled surprise and admiration, for among the prisoners was a young girl of not more than eighteen years, whose attire was much more civilized than the rest of her fellow-captives. Her features were positively beautiful, and her complexion of a rich olive, many shades lighter than that of her companions. Her hair, black and wavy, fell in heavy masses quite to her waist.

As she approached, she raised her lovely eyes for a moment with an appealing glance to the American boy.

A big, burly savage was leading her by a thong around her shapely waist.

"There's a dainty cutter, Harry," remarked Bill Travis, admiringly. "Now, if I was you—"

But the sentence was never finished; the Boy Magician had already made up his mind in the case.

Stepping to the girl's side, he laid his hand protectingly on her shoulder and motioned her captor to release his prize; but this the savage was not so ready to do. His eye flashed angrily at what he considered an attempt to rob him of his booty, and he made a threatening gesture toward the lad, when Harry at once drew his pistol, while his eyes flashed his anger.

That was sufficient. Only too well did the savage remember the power that weapon had already exhibited that day against the enemy. Silently he dropped the thong that held his captive and stalked away. But there was a vindictive look upon his ugly face that did not escape the keen eye of the lad.

The old chief, who had noticed all that transpired, now approached, nodding his head in token of his entire approval.

Meanwhile the Boy Magician had carefully unbound the thongs that tightly confined the captive's wrists. She made no effort toward escape; but walked quietly along by the side of her deliverer. Her manner was modest in the extreme.

Evidently she had been a person of rank among her own people, for her costume was far richer than that of her companions.

"If you could only speak English now, miss," said Harry, musingly, "what a big help you might be!"

"I do," was the quiet reply, with a half-smile upon her sorrowful face.

"Jerushy of Nantucket!" exclaimed the old sailor, in surprise.

A flush of mingled surprise and pleasure passed over the face of the youth at her unexpected announcement.

"I am delighted to hear it," said he, promptly. Then, speaking with grave earnestness, he added: "You can trust me, thoroughly; I will see to it that you meet with no harm."

"Your face is honest; I believe your words," she replied, simply. "My father was a white chief. I love his people."

The old sailor winked suggestively at these words and pushed on ahead out of earshot.

"I'm too old a bird to spile all their billing and cooing," he muttered.

And yet, there was a look upon his bronzed features that showed him to be not altogether satisfied with the new turn of affairs.

Meanwhile the captive was further expressing her gratitude to Harry for his protection.

"You shall be a great man among my people when they come and rescue me," she declared, with an air of firm belief that this must readily come to pass.

"I'm afraid your people will not find it an easy job to come to your rescue," remarked Harry.

"Have no doubt," was the proud reply. "My people are like the leaves upon the trees in number. They will soon come to avenge themselves upon our enemies."

"What makes you so sure of that?"

"Because your medicine-man has fled to my people. He will leave them to themselves, and there will be none to defend them."

This was news. Harry had wondered much at the absence of old Spindle-shanks but it had not entered his head that the old humbug had deserted his tribe and gone over to the enemy.

A new danger therefore overshadowed them, for the wily savage was thoroughly posted and would know when and how to make his strike most effective.

CHAPTER XI.

IN NEW QUARTERS—FLORA RELATES HER HISTORY—A PROPOSITION THAT WAS DECLINED—THE NIGHT-OWL'S CRY.

IN place of being assigned to his old quarters, the Boy Magician was conducted to another hut, much more elaborately furnished, with many conveniences and savage comforts. It was much larger than the one formerly occupied. A hanging partition of dried skins served to divide it into two parts. Around the walls were hung various rude-looking implements of warfare, besides other odd objects, the use of which was a mystery to the new occupant. In one corner lay the basket which had been used by the late medicine-man in the feat which had so mystified the young sailor necromancer—from which he conjectured that he had been installed in the quarters of his former enemy—a correct supposition.

The old sailor was sent back to rejoin the little darky, much to his discomfiture. Though assured that both the lad and himself were safe enough from harm, he did not at all fancy the idea of being separated.

On Harry's side there had also risen an embarrassing question: the young girl whom he had claimed as his prize had accompanied him to his new quarters! She was his charge to protect and he well knew she was safe only in his own hut; so, pointing toward the inner room of his savage residence, he announced to her:

"That will be yours while you remain with us. There you are safe. By what name am I to call you?"

"I am Wankeela."

"I'm afraid I can't remember that name."

"It means bright dowers," said she, simply.

"Good! Then suppose I call you Flora, for that's the English of it. I must say they gave you a very appropriate name."

"As you please," she replied, a slight blush mantling her olive cheek at the compliment.

"Then that is satisfactorily settled, Flora. Now I must leave you for a short time until I can go to my old quarters and get my things."

First taking the precaution to seek the chief and have a guard placed over his new quarters, he then directed his steps to the old tent.

"So it seems we're to part company for awhile, lad," growled the old sailor as his young chum entered the tent. "Well, you're in for it now, and I suppose we're all safe enough for the present. But I wish we were all well out of this scrape, and on our way home."

"So do I," replied the lad, earnestly; "but while we do stay, we might as well make the best of it. I shall try to contrive some plan that will enable us to slip our moorings at the first opportunity."

The old tar looked relieved.

"Just go ahead and work it, my boy, and my word for it we *will* succeed."

"Now then give me a lift with my magic chest and we will carry it to my new quarters at once. Bosun can stay with you, if you wish," encouraged Harry.

"You'd better take him along, too," remarked Bill. "How do you know but these sneaking savages might take a notion to fool with that chest sometime when you are away. If they should steal it you'd be in a nice fix, I fancy. I kalkerlate that Snowball and I can get along very well alone."

On second thought Harry was very well satisfied to take the dog, for, besides being a guard over his precious chest, the faithful animal would also be a most effectual protector to Flora.

It was still early in the evening and after partaking of the meal brought them, Harry sat down beside her and gradually drew out her history.

Her father was a sea-captain, who had been cast away upon that coast over twenty years before. He had been the sole survivor of all the crew of the ill-fated vessel. For some reason the savages had spared his life. Unable to leave, he had at length resigned himself to his fate.

His knowledge had proved of great practical benefit to the tribe. So marvelous did his skill seem to them, that he had quickly risen to a position of importance, and as time passed, and he saw no hope of getting away from them, he at last married a daughter of the chief, as a matter of policy.

Flora was the only child of that marriage, and from her position naturally held a high place among her people. Her father had carefully instructed her in his own language, and given her as good an education as lay in his power. Thus it happened that she read, wrote and talked English fluently, besides being far in advance of her own tribe in womanly ways. Her parents were both stricken down by disease, and died within a month of each other. Her grandfather, the old chief, was still living however.

The tribe fairly worshiped her, and it was her confidence in their devotion that made her so certain she would not long be detained a prisoner.

"You, too, shall go with me to my people," said she, in conclusion. "They will be kind to you because they love me, and you protected me. Among my people you shall live and die, and want for nothing."

She blushed slightly as she spoke, as if there was possibly more in her mind than she had spoken in words.

"You forget that I must return to my people over the sea," said the boy, gravely. "I have both father and mother living. If I do not return they will grieve themselves to death over me."

The young girl sighed softly before replying:

"We seldom see the white man's ships go by; still, if the white man grieves to return, Wankeela will try to aid him in what his heart longs for."

Harry felt he was treading on delicate ground, and wished to change the course of conversation.

"How was it you came to be captured to-day?" he said.

The explanation of it all was very simple and soon given. Flora, with a number of her companions, had gone from their village in a hunt for leaves and roots which were used as medicines in her tribe, and of which she possessed an excellent knowledge. Engrossed with their search, they had gone much further than they thought, and their wanderings had led them in the direction taken by the flying savages of their own tribe. The latter were only too intent upon making good their own escape. Before the women could fly, their ever-watchful enemies had stolen down upon them and captured them all.

As nearly as possible the young girl described the number of her tribe, and from her description of the fighting-men, as she called them, Harry saw that they easily outnumbered the ruder and wilder tribe that had captured his own party.

He realized, also, that it was a mere question of time before they would again return to the attack.

So interesting had been his conversation with his fair companion that time flew by unnoticed. As near as he could judge, however, it was past ten o'clock. All the village, evidently, was wrapped in slumber, as if the triumph of the day had made the warriors less cautious, for, as Harry looked out, he saw no signs of life.

As he turned back from the doorway he suddenly heard the sound of a night-owl. The girl sprung to her feet, every sense on the keen alert, and her eyes brightly shining.

An intimation of the truth flashed over her protector's mind even before he heard her confident words.

"Wankeela's people are coming to rescue her, as she said they would."

CHAPTER XII.

A RACE FOR LIFE—THE BOAT DISCOVERED—THE ENEMY UPON THEM—A WARNING THAT CAME TOO LATE.

THE Boy Magician quietly stooped and picked up his rifle.

"I guess I'll have to postpone my sleep to some other time," he quietly remarked.

The girl's eyes were ablaze with eager excitement. Her head was bent forward in an attitude of attention.

For fully ten minutes all was silent as the grave; then once more the owl-cry was repeated—this time considerably nearer to them.

"Flora," said he, suddenly turning to the girl, "I must awaken my people."

"You must not fight," she cried, earnestly; "my people would kill you."

"I don't intend to, so rest assured on that point. Still I must give these savages a chance to fly for their lives," and bringing his rifle to his shoulder he discharged it in the open air.

In a moment the sleepers were aroused, and with one accord they rushed to the tent of the young white sorcerer to learn the cause of the disturbance.

Through the interpreter, Harry announced that the enemy was stealing upon them.

Grasping their weapons they quickly gathered around their chief, ready for the onslaught if it should come.

Leaving the savages, now thoroughly on the alert, Harry proceeded to his old quarters to alarm his companions.

The old sailor was in no way pleased in having his slumbers thus broken.

"Another scrimmage, eh?" he exclaimed, in disgust. "It seems we're to have a full cargo of fighting while we stay among these rascally heathen imps."

"We will do no further to-day, Bill," said the lad, quietly. "This time we will take to our heels. But follow me to my tent. There is not a moment to spare."

His sharp ears had already heard the owl hoot for the third time.

Again in his own hut, Harry hastily opened his magic chest and proceeded to load the pockets of both himself and companions with its contents.

The girl stood watching their movements in anxious curiosity.

By this time the distant sound of shouts and yells was borne to their ears, showing that the attack had begun.

"I guess it's about time to slip our moorings now," announced Harry.

His keen eye glancing out of the doorway had detected a savage approaching in haste, evidently with a summons from the chief; so, with one stroke of his keen-bladed knife, the lad split the grass side of the hut from top to bottom—the side furthest from the door and out of range of the approaching messenger.

"Come, Flora," he called out, seizing the young girl by the hand, "we must fly."

There was no hesitation in her manner as she submitted to his leadership, and ere the approaching savage had reached the doorway, the entire party had disappeared through the rear and were safely out of sight in the darkness beyond.

The battle was now being waged in all its fury, and the interpreter realized the fact that the Boy Magician had deserted them, for it was he who came to the hut.

With a yell of rage he hurried back to inform the chief of the truth, but the savages had now all and more than they could do in resisting the attack to pay heed then to the pursuit of the white sorcerer.

As Harry had suspected, the enemy far outnumbered the attacked party, and the latter were quickly forced to retreat.

Meanwhile the fugitives, under the leadership of the lad, had pushed their way through the darkness with all possible speed. It was a starlight night, and directing their course by them, the party at length reached the beach; then they felt tolerably secure from pursuit.

"If we only had our boat," remarked Harry, regretfully, "we might bid these fellows good-by for all time."

"That's so, lad!" sighed Bill Travis; "but as we haven't, what would be the next best move?"

"We will keep right along the coast, Bill," was the reply. "It is the easiest walking, and by daylight we will be safe enough from them all."

So they continued on for nearly half an hour in the course they had taken. The moon had now come out clear and bright. Then Harry's keen eyes detected the fact that they were being pursued, for looking behind, he saw three men were running toward them with all speed.

"Stu'n'sails aloft and aloft, my lad!" cried the old sailor; "crowd on every stitch of canvas you can carry!" breaking into a lumbering run as he spoke. "A stern chase is a long one, ye lubbers."

Harry felt somewhat uneasy as to the girl's powers of endurance in such a run, as the party followed the example set them by the old sailor; but he was quickly undeceived as to the girl's abilities, for she bounded on with the lightness of a fawn, with no signs of weakening. In fact, she plainly showed that she was holding herself in reserve in order not to leave her friends behind.

"Clipper built, by Neptune!" spluttered the old sailor, whose heavy frame was beginning to tell under the unusual exertion, for he was grunting like a porpoise.

Suddenly he started forward with renewed speed, at the same time uttering an exclamation of joy.

"The ship's cutter, as sure as guns!" he exclaimed.

Sure enough, there lay the boat exactly as they had left it, secured to the beach!

But the savages were rapidly gaining upon them in the race, and there was no time to lose. Luckily the tide was high at the time. They had but a few feet to drag the boat before it would be afloat.

Springing to their task with renewed energy, they pushed it down to the water's edge. Their pursuers were rushing upon them with yells of exultation. They were now but a few rods distant and confident that their prey could not escape them.

One more vigorous push and the boat was riding upon the waves!

"In with you, quick!" cried Harry; "and look out for flying arrows!"

But the warning came too late. Even as he spoke he threw up his hands with a cry of pain and fell forward upon his face on the sand.

"Save yourself, Bill!" he cried, faintly; "they've finished me, this time."

The savages sprung forward and seized him.

All this had occurred in much less time than it takes to relate.

The old sailor, thinking the lad was able to take care of himself, had sprung to his seat and shipped his oars, but as he turned and realized the new aspect of affairs, he seemed utterly paralyzed for the moment.

One of the savages had already seized the bow of the boat and was clambering over the gunwale!

CHAPTER XIII.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE—WANKEELA'S BRAVERY—THE POISONED ARROW—A DEVOTED FRIEND—A WARNING—SPINDLE-SHANKS'S TREACHERY.

BUT the savages had counted upon their triumph much too hastily. Although staggered for a moment at the sudden misfortune that had overtaken them, the old sailor was no coward. To abandon his young friend was not in his thoughts.

With one bound he sprung from the boat back to the beach. Bang, went the trusty revolver, and one savage dropped. Instantly the two remaining savages turned to meet their new and fiery assailant; but as they did so, Harry arose to his feet, his face pale as death. In his excitement, all the pain of his wound was forgotten. He even felt no pain as his hand plucked the arrow from his wounded side.

Old Bill Travis was engaged in a deadly struggle with one of his enemies. The other was just raising his spear for a mortal thrust. Snowball sat in the boat with his eyes riveted on the scene, but too petrified with fear to move.

At that critical moment the Boy Magician leveled his weapon and fired. The uplifted spear fell harmless to the sand. One quick, sharp snap, and the fellow dropped dead, shot through the heart.

Then the remaining savage became suddenly panic stricken. With a desperate wrench he shook himself free from the old seaman's grasp and started away on a run.

Wankeela had been an excited and anxious spectator to all that had transpired; and now springing lightly to the beach, she snatched up the spear, and, quick as a flash, sent it whizzing through the air. The terrible barb struck the flying fugitive squarely between the shoulders and he dropped motionless on the sands.

"That settles his hash, I reckon! Hang me if your clipper-built craft hain't got fighting-blood in her, too," averred Bill Travis, in undisguised admiration.

Harry smiled as he remarked, with paling face, "I suppose we might as well get into the boat, now. I hope nobody else will take a notion to tackle us just now, for I—"

He stopped, reeled for a moment, and fell heavily to the sands, before the old sailor could catch him in his arms.

"Great Neptune!" gasped the old tar, "his wound must be a serious one indeed."

The girl sprung forward and seized the weapon which had caused the wound.

One keen glance and she threw it aside with the hurried words:

"The arrow is poisoned. We must lose no time in getting to my people. If we haste we may yet save his life."

"Yes, gal, but how in thunder are we to get him there?" he asked, in deep perplexity. "He is too heavy for us to carry any great distance."

The girl was kneeling at Harry's side and bathing the wound in salt water.

"Lift him in the boat and let us be off at once," cried the girl, sharply.

"But where?"

"To my people. They dwell near the sea to the south."

"How far, gal?" and the old sailor was once more all animation.

"About three miles."

There was no hesitation about the old man now. Tenderly raising his wounded mate, he placed him in the stern-sheets of the boat. The girl took her place beside him with his head resting in her lap. Glancing at her face, the old sailor saw it was wet with tears.

Probably their former captors had not noticed the presence of the boat. At any rate everything was found exactly as they had left it. The mast and sail were still securely lashed to the thwarts.

Quickly stepping the little spar, the old sailor loosed the sheet and spread it to the breeze; then seizing the tiller he headed southward, along the coast. Luckily the wind was fresh, and they made excellent headway.

Harry was now moaning with pain and delirious. His shoulder was beginning to swell from the inflammation and poison. Wankeela had succeeded in stanching the flow of blood, and her eyes were fixed searchingly and anxiously upon the coast ahead. Suddenly she uttered a cry of joy and pointed to a tall clump of trees in the distance.

"Land there," said she; "we will soon be in the home of my people now. Oh, if we are only in time!"

The sailor said never a word, but his eye was suspiciously moist as he headed the boat for the spot.

As the boat was headed toward the beach, the girl gave utterance to a peculiar cry. In a few minutes a dozen savages were seen rushing down to the beach, with yells of delight. As they saw the occupants of the boat, they stopped and raised their weapons in a threatening manner, but a few words from the girl caused them to lower their hands. They realized then that their loved princess was in the hands of friends.

As the boat touched the sands, a dozen hands were reached forward to her assistance, but she waved them all aside and hurriedly explained all that had transpired, at the same time pointing to the wounded lad.

The old sailor felt at ease in a moment, for he saw that he had nothing to fear from the girl's friends.

Two of the savages raised Harry in their powerful arms, and carrying him as tenderly as an infant they hurried off inland—the maid following in their footsteps.

Bill Travis waited only long enough to see the boat properly secured, and then followed the remaining savages, whose every action denoted friendship. Snowball stalked along by his side, mute and sober. Then for the first time the old sailor noticed that the dog was not with them.

"Where's Bosun, you young imp?" he demanded, fiercely.

"Fore de Lord, Mars'r Travis, dis chile don't know noffin' 'bout him! Hain't laid eyes on him since we done lef' de tent. 'Spec' he's done run off in de woods."

"I've a notion to wring your neck, you young varmint, fer not keeping an eye upon him," roared the old sailor. "He was worth a dozen such cow-

ards as you," after which outburst he stalked on in moody silence.

The Boy Magician was taken at once to the residence of the old chief, and the medicine-man of the tribe was summoned to his assistance.

Wounds of this description seemed to be no new thing to them. They went to work with the air of men who understood thoroughly what was to be done.

Among them was the medicine-man who had deserted from the tribe who had first captured the party—old Spindle-shanks himself! There was a malignant scowl upon his face as he recognized the lad who had so signally eclipsed him in his own art.

While pretending to busy himself in helping the others, at their tasks, he cautiously drew a sharp lance-head from his pocket. The old sailor was watching the efforts to save the life of his young friend.

His keen eye had recognized Spindle-shanks, his old enemy, and he distrusted him at once, so he made a signal to the young girl, unnoticed.

She saw by his manner that something was up, and came to his side.

"Do you see old Spindle-shanks yonder, gal?" he asked, in a low tone.

"Yes; what of him?"

"Well, keep your eye on him and see he does no harm, that's all. The skunk tried to kill the lad once before, for he hates him worse than p'izen."

"He would not dare try that *here*!"

"Ye don't know the varmint, miss. Remember it was jealousy of Harry that made him turn traitor to his own tribe."

"I'll watch him then."

"So will I, my lass."

Meanwhile the cunning malice of the deposed medicine-man had seen a way to rid himself of his enemy without suspicion. Holding the sharp lance concealed in his hand he approached the side of his victim, intending to use it unnoticed, and that he did not succeed in his fiendish purpose was due solely to Wankeela.

The old sailor's warning had put her upon her guard. She remembered that Harry had informed her somewhat of what had transpired between them. Her keen eyes marked the fiendish expression in the man's face. With one bound she sprung between him and the wounded lad, at the same time uttering a cry that disconcerted him for a moment. Then she thrust him fiercely aside and called upon the men to secure him.

The savage saw that his purpose had been divined. In spite of his struggles he was thrown down, and the tiny weapon wrenched from his grasp. The other medicine-man took it up, and examining it attentively he uttered a grunt of surprise and dissatisfaction. Then he spoke a few guttural words to the girl. His practiced eyes had detected the fact that the sharp point was tipped with poison!

Wankeela's authority was now evident. At her command the would-be assassin was securely bound and conveyed from their presence. Then the medicine-man resumed his efforts. Hastily chewing the leaves of some plant, he bound them upon the wound. At the same time he forced a few drops of black liquid between the tightly-clinched teeth of his patient.

At the end of half an hour he expressed his satisfaction; his labors began to show that they had not been without effect. The swelling in the shoulder began gradually to subside, and the black, inflamed edges of the wound to resume more nearly their natural color.

"He will live, now," exclaimed the girl, joyfully. "The poison is killed!"

"Bless your sweet little heart for saying so!" ejaculated the old sailor, fervently, his eyes beaming with happiness.

Soon the Boy Magician languidly opened his eyes. A look of resignation crossed his face as he saw the

savage faces around him. His mind instantly came to a wrong conclusion. Seeing the old sailor and the little darky also present he said sadly:

"So we are captured again, Bill? It begins to look as if Providence is against us, after all."

CHAPTER XIV.

SAVING AN ENEMY'S LIFE—A PERPLEXING QUESTION—THE CHIEF PAYS A VISIT—A TEST OF SKILL—HARRY SCENTS FUN.

WANKEELA now stepped forward proudly.

"No, not captured!" said she, with a happy look beaming from her eyes. "You are now safe among my people. You will get well and live with us," and she proceeded to tell him all that had taken place.

"So I have had a close shave for my life?" said he; "and I owe all this to you? Well, I am grateful for it, with all my heart. Old Spindle-shanks wanted to kill me, did he? I guess by this time he will begin to see that I am not fated to die by his hand. But, tell your people to do him no harm, Flora."

"But he is your enemy," repeated Wankeela, "and deserves death by our laws."

"Never mind; I should prefer to take revenge in my own way. If I don't scare him so thoroughly that he will be only too glad to get out of my sight forever then he will be a sharper chap than I have yet taken him for."

"It shall be as you wish; your word is law," said the girl, simply, and addressing one of the savages she dismissed him hastily.

From subsequent knowledge Harry learned that he had not spoken a word too soon to save his enemy's life.

The medicine-man, seeing that his patient was now out of danger, turned to leave him, when Harry drew from his pocket a small single-barreled pistol of elegant workmanship, and pressed it upon him.

The savage evidently understood something of its value. He received it with a guttural exclamation of delight and departed.

The girl evidently realized the importance of sleep and food in the case, and acted with her usual promptness. Food was ordered, then, promising to see him again early the following morning she departed, and the three fugitives were once more left alone together.

"Tell me all that has happened, Bill," said the lad, slowly; "my head was all in a whirl while Flora was trying to explain, but I did not like to talk her so."

Thus adjured the old seaman explained minutely all that had transpired from the moment that Harry had fallen unconscious upon the sands.

"You owe your life to that gal," averred the sailor, in conclusion. "I was so flustered when I see you lying there that I didn't know which way to turn. But she took command without as much as saying by your leave, and here you are, safe and sound! I tell you, my lad, she's a gem of the first water if she is a heathen!"

"She is indeed a treasure, and as noble as she is beautiful," replied Harry, warmly. "I wish I knew of some suitable way to reward her for her devotion."

"Humph!" ejaculated the sailor, who once more scented trouble. "As for that, my lad, it's about an even deal, I should say. You saved her life, when she was captured, for I believe she would have died sooner than have to become the squaw of that dog-faced, blear-eyed old savage that caught her. She squared accounts by saving your life in turn, you see. She's pretty as a picture, I'll admit, and too sensible to be mollified with gew-gaws like the rest of 'em."

"But, how am I to repay her, then?"

"There's only one way to satisfy her, as I can see, my lad."

"How is that?"

"By getting hitched to her at once, and of course you can't do that."

Although the old tar spoke so confidently he was nevertheless watching Harry closely.

The lad sighed, and a look of perplexity settled upon his face.

"Bill," he exclaimed, suddenly, "do you want to get back to the States again?"

"What a question! Do you suppose I could settle down among these uncivilized wretches?"

"Would you go alone?"

"You must be takin' leave of your senses, Harry. Do you think I'd venture to show my face to your father, and tell him I'd left you behind among the heathen? Shiver my timbers, lad, I thought you knew old Bill Travis better than that," and the old sailor looked not a little offended, as he spoke.

"I beg your pardon, Bill; but I had reasons for asking you these questions. But, do you think I would be mean enough to marry Flora and then sneak away the first chance I saw?"

The old sailor scratched his head in perplexity.

"Waal—no—to speak fair; and, as for her going back with us, it is entirely out of the question."

"Now you are talking sense. I see you don't expect me to play the cowardly rascal. If I would marry the girl I would be expected to remain here the rest of my life as one of the tribe. But, as I don't care to do that, the next thing will be to divert her affection into some other channel."

"If he can do that," muttered the sailor to himself, "then I am mightily mistaken in the gal, that's all. Unless I lose my guess, he'll find himself as thick in the slush as she is in the suds afore he gets through with this confounded business."

Old Bill's eye fell upon Snowball at this moment, and his attention was for the moment directed in another channel.

"Come here, you black scamp!" he commanded, "and let us see what it is interests you so much."

"Dat am Skipper Rogers's ticker," replied the little darky, holding the elegant watch up to view. "I was gwine to gib it to Mas'r Harry when I got tired ob looking at it. Little nigs like me don't want such t'ings," he added, putting it in the sailor lad's hand as he spoke.

Harry took the chronometer in his hand and eyed it with surprise, not unmixed with suspicion of the little darky.

"How did this come in your possession?" he demanded.

"Captain Rogers gib um to me 'kase I fotched him a glass ob water," was the reply.

Harry's keen eyes, fixed steadily upon the black face, saw the young dark had spoken the truth, and felt relieved at the explanation. At first he had fancied that Snowball must have stolen it from the dying man. The very idea was abhorrent to his feelings.

"Thank you, Snowball!" said he, as he put the gift in his pocket. "If we ever get back home safely I'll give you something in return that will be of more benefit to you."

So saying he turned his face to the wall and was soon soundly sleeping.

The old sailor smoked out one pipeful and then followed his example.

With the coming of daylight the lad awoke, exceedingly refreshed, and barring the natural weakness consequent upon the loss of so much blood, he felt as well as ever.

Bright and early Flora came to visit them, and along with her came her grandfather, the chief, as well as the medicine-man, to examine the condition of his patient.

The chief was a noble-looking savage despite the fact that he was long past his prime. There were dignity and conscious power in every movement that showed him accustomed to command.

His manner toward the girl was tender and loving. There was no doubting the strong ties of love between them. His manner also showed that he had been acquainted with their history.

Although speaking English far less fluently than his granddaughter, he was still able to make himself understood, and in brief informed the party that they could consider themselves at liberty to come and go as they pleased.

The medicine-man examined his patient and reported him all right, with no unfavorable symptoms. Then he and the chief went out together, while Flora remained.

Breakfast was now brought in to the party, and while they were eating it she told them how the battle of the previous night had resulted. Her people had won a most signal victory. The majority of their enemies had been slain in the struggle. The feud that had existed for years was now finally settled, since their enemy would be in no position to renew the fight for a long time to come. Her tribe intended to celebrate their victory by a grand pow-wow that day.

It is needless to add that Harry and his companions were invited to witness the ceremony.

After breakfast Harry passed the forenoon, under Flora's guidance, in visiting the tents of the tribe.

Accidentally, too, a piece of information came to Harry's ears that caused him no little satisfaction: old Spindle-shanks, as meddlesome as ever, had once more involved himself in a quarrel. After his release, by Flora's orders unwillingly given, he had not been satisfied to remain quiet. Conscious of his powers as a magician, he held the medicine-man of the tribe in little respect. He had even gone further, and, after boldly asserting his superior skill, challenged an open trial—to which his competitor readily assented, only insisting that the man who proved the least skillful should be punished and driven from the village.

Here, then, was another chance for the Boy Magician to get even with his old enemy, of which he was not slow to avail himself. He also saw an unlimited amount of fun in prospective.

About three o'clock in the afternoon the men of the tribe began to assemble in the open space fronting the quarters of the chief.

The grand pow-wow came first on the programme. It was opened by the savages with a slow and stately dance under the inspiration of their drums and pipes.

By degrees their steps quickened until the sable dancers grew excited. Brandishing their knives they began to cut and slash themselves fiercely until one after another dropped from sheer exhaustion, and were carried away by their friends.

It was by no means a pleasant sight to witness, and the sailor boy was not sorry when the barbaric and rather dangerous exhibition was ended.

The time had now come for the test of skill between the rival medicine-men.

From his position near the chief, the Boy Magician had full view of the ground. He now began to evince the most lively interest in what was about to take place.

His pockets were well filled with articles he proposed to use before the "circus" was ended.

As the rivals were now the center of all eyes, Harry had abundant opportunity to carry out his plans.

Old Travis was watching him closely with his expectations of sport raised to the highest pitch.

That afternoon was destined to become a marked one in the history of the tribe.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRIAL—PLAYING WITH FIRE—SNAKE CHARMING—SPINDLE-SHANKS'S TRIUMPH—"THERE'S MANY A SLIP"—THE BOY MAGICIAN'S CHALLENGE.

ALTHOUGH still somewhat scanty to civilized taste, the costume of this tribe was considerably more elaborate than that of the East Coast savages generally—showing that they were a step or two further advanced in civilization.

At a signal from the chief, the rivals stepped forward.

Spindle-shanks having given the challenge, was to begin. With a look of conscious superiority on his ugly features, he began his preparations by building a fire of brush, exactly as had been done by the white sorcerer on a former occasion.

He produced a light by rubbing two sticks together quickly in his hands.

"I wonder if he is going to copy my trick?" remarked Harry, with a grin. "If he does, it will be by different means. There never was a pair of kids made that were big enough to go over his huge paws."

"You're right there, my lad."

But Harry soon found out that he was mistaken in his surmise. Spindle-shanks continued to pile up the brush until he had succeeded in producing a thoroughly hot and lasting fire. Then by the aid of a hooked stick he drew out a number of glowing coals, which, one by one, he picked up, with an air of unconcern, and tossing them in the air, he opened his capacious jaws and caught them in their descent.

After apparently chewing them for a minute, he opened his mouth and showed it to be empty.

A grunt of satisfaction from the spectators showed that the trick was a new one to them.

Spindle-shanks stepped aside, and with an air of ill-concealed scorn motioned his rival to match him with an equally astonishing feat of magic, if he could. There was a vast difference in the bearing of the rivals. The challenged medicine-man exhibited no offensive airs. His manner was modest yet confident.

After a series of incantations, he began slowly walking in a circle, whose diameter was not more than six feet. Raising his hands and eyes upward, he suddenly uttered a shrill cry. Every eye followed his own in eager expectation, but at that instant he stooped quickly to the earth, and as he once more straightened up he held in his hand two venomous-looking snakes!

Where they came from seemed a puzzle to all, plainly expressed on their faces. Only the Boy Magician's keen eye had fathomed the apparent mystery.

That the snakes were really of most venomous description was evident by the looks of dread on the countenances of the spectators. The hooded crests of the serpents stood erect. The savage hiss they emitted showed them to be thoroughly enraged.

Despite all this, the performer handled them fearlessly, making them coil around his arms, neck and body with perfect impunity and a total recklessness as to danger.

Once or twice indeed, the largest of the pair struck savagely at his face; but by a quick motion of his head he evaded the blow; but at length the thoroughly enraged serpent bit him on the wrist and drew blood!

A cry of alarm broke from the lips of the spectators, and the face of Spindle-shanks wore a fiendish grin of delight. He fancied, as did the rest, that the snake-charmer had gone a step too far; but the latter exhibited not the least alarm. Deliberately releasing the clinging coils of the serpents, he placed them on the ground. With his finger he drew a magic circle around them, and to the astonishment of all, the serpents gliding within the circle, made not the slightest offer to cross that invisible line.

Having thus effectually prevented them from escaping, the snake-charmer walked over to the fire, and then holding his wounded wrist over the blaze he muttered a few words of incantation. Then, with a smile of satisfaction, he turned to his chief and made a low bow, to signify that his part of the programme was ended, for the present.

Before stepping aside, he uttered a few words to his adversary.

Flora was standing by the side of Harry at the time, and in answer to his look of inquiry, she said:

"He tells the other that he is free to try the same with the serpents if he wishes."

But old Spindle-shanks did not seem to care for a nearer acquaintance with the dangerous reptiles. He was cunning enough however to evade the invitation without seeming to show his true feelings. Assuming a look of profound contempt, he declined the offer.

Providing a basket, he performed the same trick that has been previously described. This was apparently more than ever astonishing to this tribe, who had never witnessed it before.

Spindle-shanks looked slightly uneasy during the operation, as if he feared some strange interference such as he had previously met with; but this time everything went on smoothly to the end without interruption by the Boy Magician.

Once more the medicine-man of the tribe stepped forward. Approaching the fire, he kicked aside the burning brush, leaving bare the live, glowing embers. Gathering up his flowing robe, he walked bare-footed over the glowing coals as coolly as if it were but the softest sward.

A smile of contempt spread over the face of old Spindle-shanks. Without hesitation, he deliberately followed in his adversary's footsteps.

"That's a game two can play at, it seems," laughed Harry. "Spindle-shanks has got the advantage now, and he intends to keep it."

"I hope he will not," said Flora, anxiously. "Our medicine-man is a good, true man; the other is like those serpents yonder."

"Never mind, Flora," said Harry, soothingly. "Let old Spindle-shanks have his swing. Give him rope enough, and he will hang himself before he gets through with his little game."

"Yes; but if he wins, he will take the place of the medicine-man of our tribe!"

"Not if I know it, he won't."

"How are you going to help it, Harry?" she anxiously inquired.

This was the first time she had ever called him by name. It sounded very sweet to his ears coming from her lovely lips.

"Wait and see, Flora. Remember I, too, am a medicine-man among my own people. Besides, I have a debt to settle with that crafty scoundrel, and I always pay my debts when I can."

A look of dismay came over the face of the medicine-man as he saw Spindle-shanks thus coolly follow in his lead.

Possibly it was a feat which he thought was known to no other mortal, or else the exultation in the face of his enemy caused him to lose his presence of mind. At any rate, he walked slowly toward the chief, and stood irresolute.

"Confound it!" muttered Harry, "he is going to give up the contest already, it seems! I'll bet ten to one that he could beat old Spindle-shanks hollow if he only had a little more confidence."

Meanwhile his antagonist strode forward and uttered a few guttural words to the chief. Every eye was turned upon him as he stood there, proud and exultant.

"What is the old turkey-cock gabbling about now?" asked Harry, quickly.

"He claims the triumph," explained the girl, with a sigh of disappointment.

"Is that his expectation? I guess it is about time for me to take a hand in this circus, myself. Tell your chief to wait a moment before making his decision."

"What reason shall I give?"

"Tell your chief that the white magician, who is a friend to your people, disputes the claim of this long-legged old imp."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CHALLENGE ACCEPTED—THE BOY MAGICIAN BULLET-PROOF—SPINDLE-SHANKS BAFFLED—A HINT THAT WAS ACTED UPON—A MAJESTIC EXHIBITION OF POWER—THE STORM BREAKS.

A look of surprise rested upon the face of Wankeela at these bold words; but she repeated them to the chief, while the exclamation of satisfaction that broke from the spectators showed at least that they were not in sympathy with the exultant claimant.

Every eye was turned upon the young white magician. Although he had taken an active part against them, on the occasion of their attack on the enemy, they had looked upon him more as a great warrior than as a great medicine.

Spindle-shanks alone knew the truth, and his triumphant manner dropped at once when he heard the challenge.

On the other hand, Harry was calm and collected, as he stepped forward and faced the party.

The Boy Magician having given the challenge was the first to begin the proceedings. Addressing the medicine-man, through Flora, he asked for the loan of the pistol he had given him the night previous, promising him at the same time that it should be restored unharmed when he had finished.

The old sailor had been a watchful spectator.

"Have a care, lad," he warned, in a low voice.

"These black-skins know something of the use of fire-arms you must remember."

Harry smiled confidently, but made no reply.

The pistol being handed to him, he poured in the powder and rammed a light wad down upon it. Then he produced a leaden bullet, which he carefully nicked with his knife and handed around for inspection. This done, he passed it to the chief and requested him to drop it into the weapon with his own hand.

All these movements were perfectly open to show them there could be no deception.

Taking the weapon once more in his own hands he rammed down the bullet, and placing a cap on the nipple it was ready for use.

He now offered to let any one of their number fire the weapon at his head.

Before any one else could speak, old Spindle-shanks eagerly accepted the offer. He had been keenly watching the proceedings, and felt satisfied that there could be no possible deception. Besides, he had seen an exhibition of the wonderful power of the white man's weapon, and now was only too glad to have a chance to use it upon his enemy.

"You dare not let me try," he said, defiantly, as he extended his hand for the pistol.

"Oh, ho!" cried Harry, as the words were repeated to him. "That's the racket, eh?" and with a contemptuous smile on his handsome face he handed the weapon to his enemy. He would almost have been willing to trust such a weapon in his hand under any circumstances, feeling sure he could not hit even a big mark if he tried.

After explaining to him how to properly handle the weapon, and to pull the trigger, the young necromancer walked some paces away, and turning faced the black magician.

Spindle-shanks elevated the pistol, took careful aim and fired.

There was a loud report, followed by a cry of astonishment.

The Boy Magician stood unharmed before them, with the leaden bullet held securely *between his teeth*!

He coolly took it out and passed it around for inspection, that all could see it was the identical bullet he had marked.

A look of terror settled upon the face of Spindle-shanks. He began to think his hated enemy had spoken truly when he said he was safe from harm at his hands. Surely he must be more than mortal to thus play with Death.

Again the Boy Magician took the weapon and once

more reloaded it as on the previous occasion; then with a twinkle of humor in his eyes, he challenged Spindle-shanks to stand as a target, as he had. But the wily savage did not consider himself bullet-proof, and quickly declined the offer.

"That's one triumph, anyhow," thought Harry.

His look of scorn at his enemy's cowardice was not without its effect upon the spectators. He treated the refusal with an air of unconcern.

Taking a piece of white paper from his pocket he tacked it up against a neighboring tree; then, standing off at about fifteen paces, he fired at the target. A score of savages rushed to the spot to see the bullet-hole. One swift glance and they sprung back in terror. There was no hole in the paper—only a red blotch of blood!

While they were jabbering over the strange sight, Harry chanced to look upward. In the distance he saw a black cloud not larger than a man's hand. Every moment it began to spread and grow larger.

"That's a squall coming up I fancy, my lad," remarked the old tar, noting the direction of his glance.

"I see it, Bill; and what's more, I intend to make use of it. If these savages do not get a thorough shaking up before I am done with them, then I lose my guess."

Turning to Flora, he said, quietly: "Tell your chief the white sorcerer is more powerful than any black medicine-man. In his grasp he holds the thunder and lightnings of the heavens. He has but to call them and they obey his word. Tell my enemy yonder that did I wish I could strike him dead where he stands."

With wondering face the girl repeated all that had been told her.

Harry had a well-defined purpose in view; all this braggadocio had been done with the object of gaining time.

The savages, having their attention drawn to him, did not notice the coming storm, which was, however, increasing with tropic rapidity. A tempest of unusual magnitude was impending.

"Look!" he cried, imperiously. "Yonder medicine-man fancies he can match his skill with the white sorcerer. Watch me now, and you will see that all he has done is but as child's play to my power. He swallows the fire. See! I spit it out before you."

As he spoke, a shower of sparks were emitted from his mouth.

At the wonderful sight they all backed away from him: but not an eye was taken from his face.

A look of awe settled upon the spectators.

Producing a small bottle, the Boy Magician dug a hole in the ground at his feet.

Placing the bottle therein, in an inclined position, he buried it until only the neck was left exposed; then taking a lighted ember from the fire, he touched it to the mouth of the bottle.

"See!" he cried; "the white sorcerer bottles the thunders of the heavens."

There was a puff of smoke, and then from the ground came a sound of muffled thunder.

It was followed by a distant echo, which Harry recognized as the genuine article; but the savages, with eyes fixed upon the bottle, ascribed it all to the white magician's power.

They would have fled from the spot only that they seemingly were chained by fear or fascination. Spindle-shanks, particularly, was in mortal terror at the sight of Harry's lightning.

"Tremble! you coward!" he cried, in majestic tones. "Do you dare defy my power now, or shall I call the swift lightning to strike you where you stand?"

As he spoke, he produced a short wand and waved it over the fire.

At every movement of the mysterious wand, the forked lightning could be seen darting from it.

"Speak!" cried the Boy Magician.

Flora repeated the words in her own language,

and even as she spoke, the air grew dark with the swift-coming storm.

Spindle-shanks, terrified with fear, but crafty still, wavered.

At that instant a sheet of vivid lightning broke from the heavens, followed by a deafening peal of thunder.

Amid it all stood the Boy Sorcerer, unmoved amid the fury of the elements.

CHAPTER XVII.

SPINDLE-SHANKS AS A SUPPLIANT—EXACTING CONDITIONS—THE BOY MAGICIAN EXPLAINS HIS POWER—BILL TRAVIS'S QUESTION—A TEST OF SINCERITY.

WITH one cry of mortal terror, the savages fled, and as they did so, the rain-cloud broke, and let its contents upon them in torrents.

The lightning had struck a tall palm not more than a hundred feet from the spot, and splintered it to the roots.

Seeing himself deserted, Harry smiled triumphantly.

"I could not have timed the programme nicer," he muttered. "I fancy old Spindle-shanks has got a scare to-day that he won't get over in a hurry."

As he was about moving off to rejoin his companions, his eye caught sight of the two serpents still lying within the magic circle.

Like all the rest of the brute creation, the storm seemed to terrify them. They lay stretched out straight, their bodies quivering as if with fear.

Paying little heed to the storm, seeing that he was already drenched, Harry stood for a moment irresolute.

"I've heard that these snake-charmers always remove the poison fangs before performing with serpents," said he, musingly. "Surely, if it was not so in this case, the medicine-man would never have got over the bite he received—at least, not by any such means as he pretended to use. I'll take my chances on it, at any rate. It will be another surprise to these benighted heathen."

So saying, he dextrously picked up the serpents by the tails and started ahead.

The snakes, however, made no attempt to bite. Harry afterward remarked, "they hung as limp as a couple of dead eels."

Stopping at the tent of the medicine-man, the young American returned him his deadly pets with a low bow, and then sought his own quarters, where he found his companions anxiously awaiting him.

"By Neptune, lad!" exclaimed the old sailor, in delight, "you've fetched 'em this time, sure enough! Hang me, if I didn't feel sort of queer myself, for all I know you so well."

Then, in a hesitating tone, he added:

"You—haven't—entered—in any—bargain—have you, my lad?"

"What—with old Spindle-shanks? I should smile if I did."

"No, no; I don't mean that."

"What then?"

"I've heard say," continued the old sailor, in the same hesitating manner, "that a chap can sell his soul to Old Nick, and so do things that no other mortals could."

Harry sat down, fairly convulsed with laughter.

"I don't see anything funny in such a bargain, my lad."

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Laugh now, if you will, my lad; but you'll pay up for it all when the devil gets his own."

"Ha! ha! ha! Excuse me, Bill; but it is so perfectly ridiculous, I can't help laughing."

"What is?"

"The idea of such a thing! Why, if I had made such a bargain, don't you suppose I would have called on his satanic majesty long ago and made him help us all out of this ugly scrape?"

"Then, how else could you do the wonderful things you did this afternoon?" he managed to demand.

"If you had asked me that in the first place, I would have told you at once, old friend. I could not help laughing at you, for I had no idea you could ever imagine anything so absurd. All that you saw me do was simply sleight-of-hand, aided by my knowledge of chemistry. If it had not been for the articles taken from my magic chest, I would have been beaten out of my boots by these same ignorant heathen."

"But the fire coming out of your mouth, my lad?"

"A very common trick, which I will explain to you at some other time."

"The thunder, too—it was as natural as life."

"Only chemicals, Bill. The echo of the distant thunder only made it appear the more real."

"But there wasn't no kemikils, as ye call 'em, when you made the lightning with that little stick."

"You are still incredulous, I see," laughed the lad, good-humoredly, producing the article as he spoke. Here is the stick you refer to. You see it is hollow, with a number of small holes punched through it."

There was a small fire already kindled in the tent, and by its aid Harry proceeded with his explanation.

"I put a little prepared powder of resin in it, and as I shake it over the fire it sifts through the holes and produces the effect of lightning."

He illustrated the trick before the sailor as he spoke.

"You see, Bill, it is all easy enough to understand when you know how it is done. To tell the truth, I had not thought of producing this trick when I began. It was only when I saw the storm-cloud gathering in the sky that the idea suggested itself to my mind. Luckily the apparatus I wanted was in my pocket. I timed my movements judiciously, and so it had a more realistic effect."

"Humph; I see. But, how about that infernal nitro-glycerine? Have you got that in your pockets too?" asked the old salt, in some trepidation.

Harry looked a trifle uneasy at the question.

"On my life I forgot all about that," he replied, as he hastily produced a small tin package. "It is too dangerous an article to be carried around with me in this manner."

"I should kalkerlate it was!" assented old Bill, walking off to the furthest side of the tent. "Better pitch it in the sea and get rid of it forever."

"No, I don't care to do that. It may prove of service to us yet; but I'll put it where it can do nobody any harm until it is wanted, and that at once."

So saying, he walked out in the driving rain and digging a hole in the ground near he buried the dangerous article out of sight.

"I feel a blamed sight easier now," confessed the old tar when he returned.

"So do I," replied Harry, "on your account. The stuff is safe enough, though, as long as it is properly handled."

"Humph!" grunted the old sailor. "I've seen men that didn't seem to care a fig for their lives; but, hang me if you don't beat the deck, my lad."

"De debbil hisself no scare Mars'r Harry," put in Snowball.

"I hope he won't try the experiment," laughed the young magician. "I'm afraid you might lose some of your confidence in my bravery. Hallo, who is coming now?"

The footsteps outside were approaching the spot, and stopped at the entrance to the tent. The next moment the fear-stricken figure of old Spindle-shanks, dripping with rain, entered their presence.

Advancing toward his young rival he prostrated himself flat on his face at his feet.

Behind him stood Flora.

"Blast the scoundrel! I'll kick him out like a dog!" exclaimed the old sailor, as he rose to execute his threat.

"Hold on, Bill!" protested Harry, quietly; "leave me to manage this in my own way. I think I see what is up."

Turning to the girl he asked: "What does this fellow want now?"

"He says you have bewitched him," replied the girl, with a sparkle of satisfaction in her bright eyes.

"He begged me to come with him and ask you to remove the spell. He is all in a tremble, as you see."

Harry did see, and rightly guessed the cause. The savage's nerves had received a terrible shock from what he had seen. He was suffering from nervous prostration which his ignorant mind had ascribed to some witchcraft exercised over him. But, the Boy Magician had no intention of undecieving him, for here was an opportunity to increase his power and at the same time do some practical benefit.

"Snowball!" said he, addressing the little darky, "do you know the tent of the medicine-man?"

"Who am he, Mars'r Harry?"

"Well, the chap that played with the snakes this afternoon."

"Yes, sah; I done see'd him when he run home."

"Go bring him here."

"I'm afeard of dem 'ar snakes, so I is," demurred the little darky.

"I will go myself," said Flora.

"No! stay where you are. I am not in the habit of being disobeyed."

The little darky knew better than to refuse when he saw that fire in his master's eye, so he darted out and presently returned with the individual wanted.

"Now, Flora, tell old Spindle-shanks to stand up on his feet."

The latter did so, trembling.

Assuming his tragic manner, the Boy Sorcerer said, slowly:

"I will remove the spell on certain conditions. If he refuses them, I turn him loose to the fury of the heavens."

At that instant a vivid flash of lightning illuminated the room, followed by a long and continued peal of deafening thunder.

Spindle-shanks again dropped flat on his face in mortal terror.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CASE OF MIND-READING—THE CONDITIONS ACCEPTED—WANKEELA REPULSED—BILL TRAVIS GROWS INDIGNANT—CHANGING TALK—BOBUN PUTS IN AN APPEARANCE.

THE fear and trepidation of the savage were almost ludicrous.

He mumbled a few guttural words.

"He says he will do anything you ask," repeated Wankeela.

"Coming to your senses, again, eh? Stand up then!"

He did so.

"Tell the medicine-man here, that you will be friendly, and never try to rob him of his position again."

The condition was readily acceded to.

"Lastly, you must leave this place at once, and return to your own tribe."

"They would kill me."

"It would serve you right if they did. I'll kill you if you refuse, so take your choice."

Between the two alternatives the savage was not long in deciding to go.

"I thought you would. Tell your people any story you please to account for your absence. They do not know that you have turned traitor, and will be glad to get you back again without quarreling over trifles. Tell them the white sorcerer was angry at them for making him a prisoner. That was why he left them to fight their own battles. You have seen the white man's power; so remember. Tell your chief that the magic chest and my 'thunder-stick' (rifle) must be sent to me at once. You will have to get the best of the dog first, somehow,

Mind, though, he too must be brought with you, uninjured, or I will take terrible revenge upon you. Your men shall be allowed to go back without harm. Do you understand, thoroughly, all that I have said?"

The girl had faithfully repeated his words in her own language.

Spindle-shanks looked relieved. The conditions imposed upon him were far lighter than he had reason to believe would be asked; so he gave a hurried assent.

The Boy Magician had been keenly watching his countenance, and noticed the old crafty look creeping back into his evil eyes.

Well he understood its import.

"You scoundrel!" he cried, in a rage. "See! The white man reads your heart. You make a promise that you have no intention of keeping! You think that when you are once more among your own people you will be safe. You would kill the dog and destroy my property!"

Spindle-shanks started back and the expression of fear returned, for very correctly had Harry stated the thoughts that were working in his brain.

"I guess there is no use in wasting time over you any longer," said Harry, drawing his revolver as he spoke. "You might as well die at once."

"No! No! I promise!" was the thoroughly terrified reply.

"Then go! I spare your life for the present, but mind, if you fail to keep your word I will cast the spell over you again; then no earthly power can save you."

The savage skulked away from his presence, and Harry felt satisfied now that his fear would compel him to keep his part of the contract.

The Boy Magician then held out his hand to the medicine-man of the tribe.

"Let us be friends," said he, frankly. "The white sorcerer would do you no injury, for you saved his life."

Although not a little afraid of the man who had shown such marvelous powers, the savage was only too glad to accept this offer of friendship.

"Woos-kan shall be the white man's slave," said he, quietly. "What he may ask shall be done at once."

There was a quiet dignity in his manner that showed the words were spoken in sincerity.

He took Harry's outstretched hand in his own, bowed low over it, and departed.

Flora, too, was about to follow his example, when Harry stopped her.

"What has the white sorcerer done that you should fly from him thus?" he asked, quietly.

There was a tenderness in his voice not easily to be resisted.

Add to this the fact that Flora fairly worshiped the handsome white youth, and it became impossible for her to refuse an answer.

She stood irresolute a moment before replying.

"Poor Flora is no mate for the wonderful white man," said she, sadly.

"Humph! The gal's got more sense than I gave her credit for," grunted the old sailor in an undertone.

"Be quiet, Bill!" exclaimed Harry, somewhat impatiently.

Turning once more to the girl, he said, gravely:

"The white sorcerer is your friend. Why should you fly from his presence among your own people?"

"I am but a poor ignorant girl, the daughter of a savage. The savage must choose from his own. The white man with the maiden of his own color. The dove mates not with the eagle."

Harry took the unresisting hand of the girl in his own.

"Flora," said he, "we can still be friends, I trust. If the eagle does not mate with the dove he may still defend it. The white man will return to his people some day; but he will never forget the one who has done so much for him."

The girl snatched her hand from his grasp, turned swiftly away, and disappeared in the darkness.

"That's what I call a purty kettle of fish!" declared the old sailor.

"Why?"

"Arter all the gal has done for the hull caboodle of us you coolly tell her you are too good for her."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, indeed!" mimicked the old sailor, with more warmth than Harry had ever seen him exhibit before. "Don't try to stop me, lad, for I *will* speak my mind. I say the gal is a prize, sich as a man don't run across in many a long cruise. She'd lay down her life for you in a minute—that she would. I wish I warn't sich an old battered hulk myself or I'd—"

"Would marry her," interposed Harry, finishing the sentence for him. "And now, when you think I won't, you're off on the opposite tack."

"Yes; but—"

"But what?"

"Well, I didn't think you'd—you'd bring it out so suddint—like a slap in the face for all the world."

"Bill?"

"What is it?"

"You are right about that, old friend. I certainly did not intend to hurt her feelings. She is a noble-hearted girl and fit to be a queen."

"Now you are talking sense ag'in," replied the old sailor, somewhat mollified.

"And," continued Harry, slowly, "if the thing was to be done over again I don't know but that I would—"

"Would what?"

"Put my words in still more guarded language, that's all."

"You're a brute, my lad!" exclaimed the old sailor, angrily, for he had expected a far different answer.

"Thank you, Bill!"

"No thanks for what belongs to you. I didn't know the girl afore, but I say now that if her skin is a trifle darker than your own, she is far too good for such a stuck-up jackanapes as you are!"

The old sailor had succeeded in working himself up into quite an angry mood upon the subject.

Harry knew him too well, and possessed too deep a friendship for him, to pay any heed to the very uncomplimentary remark.

"Better turn in for the night, Bill," he suggested, "you'll wake up in a better humor in the morning."

The old sailor did not deign to reply to this bit of advice. Instead he filled up his pipe and began smoking.

If the old sailor had closely watched Harry's face, he would have seen that the lad had not meant one-half of what he had been saying; in fact he did care more for the young girl than he cared to acknowledge even to an old friend like Bill Travis.

He was of a very independent spirit, too, and the old man's interference, though well meant, had nettled him. More than that, what would the girl think of his words, however kindly meant?

While he thus sat pondering over the matter, he suddenly heard a sound that made him spring to his feet:—it was the well-known bark of "Bosun!"

The next instant the noble animal sprang into the tent and was expressing his joy in his dumb way at once more meeting with his old friends.

CHAPTER XIX.

BOSUN PROVIDED FOR—SNOWBALL BRINGS NEWS—A PREMONITION OF DANGER—A MYSTERY TO BE SOLVED.

AFTER petting the noble animal to his heart's content, Harry sent Snowball out to get him a good supper.

While the little darky was absent on his errand, Harry was once more disturbed by new-comers—this time it was two savages, and they bore between them the magic chest. He recognized the messen-

gers as of the tribe from which he had lately escaped. One of them, indeed, was the individual who had formerly acted as interpreter for him.

The two men looked nervous and uneasy. They felt very insecure so long as they remained in the camp of their enemy.

One of them carried Harry's rifle in his hands. He passed it over to its rightful owner with the remark:

"Klingee say, white chief no let us hurtee."

Harry rightly surmised that Klingee was the right name for the individual whom he had dubbed Spindle-shanks.

"Yes," he replied, "I said so and I mean it."

"Cetywango men follow us—throw spear, mebbe. We get kill."

"I guess not," replied Harry, quietly, and as he spoke he beckoned to the knot of scowling faces he saw peering in at the doorway, whereupon a half-dozen black warriors entered the hut.

By a series of signs, the Boy Magician managed to convey to them the fact that he had pledged his word for the messengers' safety. He also impressed upon them the certainty that any attempt to do them injury would be known to him at once and fully visited again upon the head of him who attempted it.

All this was imparted to them solely by pantomime.

More than once Harry wished heartily that Flora was present to act as interpreter.

True, he could have used the services of the savage who stood before him.

But he rightly judged that his listeners would have no faith in their enemies speaking truthfully, especially when their own interests were so deeply concerned.

The Boy Magician saw that his meaning was understood and would be duly respected; then he dismissed the party.

Snowball soon returned with a bountiful supper for the dog, but Harry had lain down and composed himself for sleep. The little darky was fidgety and uneasy. Finally he blurted out:

"Be you asleep, Mars'r Harry?"

"No," was the reply. "What's wanted?"

"Well, den, I done tole yer, I t'inks we's gwine to hab anoder squabble."

Harry turned his face toward the speaker in some anxiety.

"What do you mean, Snowball?"

"You see, I met de gal and she gits me de grub fo' de dog."

"Yes."

"Well, when I lef' her I cuts acrost de back way from dar, 'kase yer see it's a heap nearer. It's done stop rainin', yer know, an' de stars begin to peep out so dis chile t'inks dat eb'ryt'ing's all straight."

"Bother your rigmarole, Snowball! If you've got any news to tell out with it at once!"

"I see comin' to it, Mars'r Harry. Fust t'ing I know I see'd ten or twelb niggers playin' high spy round de trees. I s'pected dey war up to no good and I legged it back as if de debbil war arter me."

Harry thought quietly over the narration a few moments, then remarked:

"I guess it's all straight, Snowball. These fellows that brought the chest back must have had companions with them." Probably they wanted to make sure that no harm befell them, or revenge themselves, in case of treachery.

"Ispec's you is right, Mars'r Harry. You mus' know more about it dan a poah little darky like me. I'se powerful glad dat dere ain't gwine ter be a squabble fer I done see'd enuf ob dem."

"Nor I either; but it isn't at all likely that Spindle-shanks's friends will tackle this tribe again, in a hurry," and turning away his face, was soon soundly sleeping.

The old sailor still sat smoking and caressing the dog in an absent-minded sort of way. His thoughts were still dwelling over the words that had lately passed between him and his young friend.

"Tain't that I like to quarrel with him," he mused; "he's got more l'arnin' than an old shell-back like me that never war in school. P'r'aps the lad is right. As the world goes I know he is; but fer all that, it looks purty mean an' selfish to turn a sweet, lovin' gal off so sharp. I'll bet my last pipeful of 'baccy, that she won't come a-nigh the hull kitten-crew of us ag'in in a hurry, an' I don't blame her. The lad will be sorry enough fer it, too, or I'm no judge of human nature. Blarst my meddlesome old tongue! If I'd only kept my mouth shet it mout hav' bin diff'rent."

With a sigh of regret for his own share in the transaction, he knocked the ashes from his pipe and went to sleep as the rest had already done.

Confident of the friendship of that tribe they felt no necessity for keeping watch.

Harry passed an uneasy night. As he awoke the old sailor early the next morning, he asked, gravely:

"Did you ever feel a presentiment of danger, Bill?"

"A what, my lad?"

"Did you ever have the feeling come over you that something was going to happen?"

"Ay, several times in my life."

"Well, that is just the way that I feel this mornin'. I've had nothing but horrible dreams all night long, and I feel that there is mischief brewing somewhere."

"Mark my words, lad, if there is, old Spindle-shanks is at the bottom of it, somehow."

"No; you are mistaken there. I'll venture he will try no more tricks on us."

"Then, where can it come from?"

"I don't know; but I suppose we will find out, soon enough."

Shortly afterward their breakfast was placed before them. Harry looked surprised and not a little disappointed. The attendant was not Flora, who had formerly acted in that capacity, but an old negress, who looked keenly and suspiciously around the interior and then hurried away.

At the time this was of course ascribed to a natural curiosity on her part, but afterward they discovered that her conduct was owing to other causes.

The Boy Magician began to feel the loss of Flora's smiling face.

"She will not stay away very long," he reasoned. "If she thinks anything of me she will pay us a visit before the day is over."

Finishing their breakfast, Harry and his old friend started for a walk around the village; but before they had gone more than a few steps, they became aware of an unusual bustle and commotion among their savage friends.

In the midst of it, the old chief passed them hurriedly, entered their tent for a moment, and presently emerged again, with a puzzled and anxious look upon his face.

"What's in the wind, now?" ejaculated the old sailor. "The old coon seen us, that's sart'in, an' yet he goes straight for the fo'castle."

"Wait. We will soon know the meaning of it all, for he is making his way toward us."

The old chief approached the pair. Looking straight in Harry's face, with an inquiring look, he said: "Wankeela!"

The lad's first thought was that the girl had appealed to her uncle to forward her suit.

"Well, what of her?" he asked, inquiringly, forgetting that the old chief could speak but very little English; but the old man interpreted the words from the expression of his face.

"Gone," he replied.

"Gone?"

"Yes. No find. When look?"

He wanted to ask when she was last seen by Harry.

"Last night," said the Boy Magician, beginning to grow uneasy now from another cause.

"No find. Gone!" repeated the chief, as his followers gathered around him.

"What can this mean?" asked Harry, turning to his comrade. "How could any harm happen to her among her friends?"

"Your dream, my lad. This is the trouble ye felt coming."

"It must be; and yet I fail to understand what can be the matter."

"Where sleep?" he asked, addressing the chief.

The latter understood and led the way to her tent, followed by the entire party.

It was found to be the one directly adjoining that of the chief.

As they were about to rush in Harry waved them back. He felt that if any clew remained to account for her disappearance it would be blotted out by so many meddlesome fingers and feet; so stationing the medicine-man at the entrance to keep out intruders, Harry stepped within.

The interior of the tent was scrupulously neat, and bore many traces of the higher civilization of its late occupant. Arranged around the walls were a number of articles, books, etc., that Harry rightly judged had once been the property of her father. The cot, standing in one corner, was still made up, in perfect order.

This proved one of two things: either the girl had been missing since the previous night, or else, having slept in the bed as usual, she had made it up and strolled off on a morning ramble, from which she would return ere long.

But on inquiring he learned that she always ate breakfast with her grandfather, the chief, and that no one had seen her that morning. It seemed plain, therefore, that she had been mysteriously abducted.

Like a flash it crossed his mind at the moment of what the little darky had told him the previous night in regard to the men prowling around the outskirts of the village. His mind was made up in a moment.

With a reassuring nod to the chief, he placed his fingers to his mouth and uttered a shrill whistle.

In a moment more old Bosun, the dog, came bounding to his side.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TRAIL FOUND—A Sudden Obstruction—Brought to Bay—The African Lion—A Daring Shot.

THE Boy Magician knew the dog to be possessed of wonderful sagacity. Possibly he might be able to employ this sagacity on the present occasion.

Now that the girl was missing, and possibly in imminent peril, he began to realize how deeply his affections had become fixed upon her.

Returning into her tent he looked around for some article that she had lately worn. Upon the wall hung a sort of sash, trimmed with small pearls and feathers, which she had worn when he first interfered in her behalf.

Bidding the dog smell of the sash, the intelligent brute sniffed at it a moment and then whined. He seemed to comprehend what was wanted of him, so Harry began making the circuit of the village, while Bosun followed slowly, his nose to the ground.

They had gone nearly three-fourths of the distance when the dog suddenly uttered a bark and moved off at right angles.

Keeping on in this direction for nearly twenty yards he again stopped and looked up at his master as if in perplexity.

But Harry was now able to take up the clew. He saw at once what had occurred. The ground at this point was soft, and bore the impress of many naked feet.

Most of them were long and large, yet among them he could distinguish the dainty footprints of the girl's small sandals.

The larger footprints led away from the spot, but the smaller ones were not to be distinguished among them.

The mystery was now clear: the point on which he stood was near to his own quarters. After leaving him, the night before, Flora must have started

to return to her own tent. Probably not caring to let any one see the misery which she could not conceal, she had taken the outside path, and giving little thought or heed to danger, had run square into the hands of her enemies.

These were undoubtedly the prowlers that the little darky had reported.

Harry's every sense was now on the alert. The enemy, whoever they were, had at least twelve hours' start of them.

By this time the old sailor and most of the tribe had gathered around him, anxious to know what was the next step to be taken.

Harry explained to the people as best he could what had transpired.

Tapping his weapons, he pointed inquiringly to the tribe and looked inquiringly at the chief. He wished to know if he could count on their assistance to aid him.

His meaning was at once understood. There was no lack of volunteers for the enterprise.

Selecting three powerful blacks, whom he thought would be most efficient and courageous, and including of course the old sailor, he was ready for the start. Ordering Snowball to bring his rifle from the tent, the party started off upon the tracks of the enemy.

For some distance there was no trouble in doing this, for the ground was soft, and the trail easily discernible. As far as could be judged, the abducting party were eight in number, while the Boy Magician's own force, including himself, was but five. Still with the firearms they possessed they would be more than a match for twice their number.

At first Harry thought that the abduction had been performed by a strange tribe, for the trail led in a different direction from that of the tribe in which he had formerly been a prisoner; but gradually their course was found to sweep to the left until it pointed straight toward his enemies' village. Confidently, now, and with rapid strides, he led the way. Mile after mile was passed, until even the three savages began to show signs of weariness.

As for the old sailor, it was only by extra exertions he managed to keep up at all.

"Blow it all, lad," he finally exclaimed. "You slide through like a privateer in full chase. A heavy lugger like me can't begin to keep abreast of you."

Harry slackened his speed with manifest reluctance.

"I can't help but feel impatient, Bill," said he. "I will never forgive myself if any harm should come to the girl. If I hadn't acted like a fool last night this could never have happened."

"Pshaw, my lad! If these black devils were hanging around with the intention of cutting out the heart, they'd been sure to lay down it sooner or later. It's all the work of that old snake, Spindle-shanks."

"Yes, I see that now. The scoundrel thinks that as long as he kept his word to the letter, that I would have no power to harm him, but if I only had him here at this moment, I'd wring his neck."

"Never fear, my lad; you shall have that pleasure yet. I'm only sorry we let him slip out of our fingers when we had a sure grip on him."

The pursuers soon reached a small stream which was quickly crossed. Here they found traces showing the enemy had stopped for awhile. Harry also saw that the print of Flora's sandals was again discernible. This was encouraging, for it proved two things—that the enemy had stopped to rest, and they also felt secure from pursuit.

Thus far they had bodily carried their prize, but on crossing the stream she had been allowed to walk.

Harry had assured himself that his rifle had not been tampered with. He had then carefully loaded it while following up the trail.

As near as he could judge, his enemies were but an hour or so in advance, and as they considered

themselves safe from pursuit and walked leisurely, there was yet a hope of catching them before they could reach their village.

The dog was once more following the trail a few yards ahead of the party.

Presently he stopped short and uttered an uneasy whine.

"Something's in the wind," exclaimed Harry. "Look at his tail! As I live he acts as if he's afraid!"

As he spoke a low deep growl or roar shook the air, and at the sound, the ~~savages~~ turned with one accord and ran for their very lives.

Looking up at a small elevation on the right, from which the sound came, Harry could but feel good cause for alarm.

"The African lion!" he whispered.

He had spoken truly, and a most magnificent specimen of its kind it was.

As the lad looked, he saw it crouching. Its eyes were fixed upon the dog, who seemed to feel the hopelessness of his position, yet was too brave to run. He stood braced for the attack, showing his white teeth to his foe.

Harry dropped on one knee and brought his rifle to bear.

"Great snakes, don't fire!" whispered the old sailor. "Your life won't be worth a cent if you miss him."

"I shall not miss him!" was the quiet reply.

The lion, lashing the ground furiously with his tail, gathered himself for the fatal spring; then his huge body shot through the air. At the same instant the rifle rung out sharply. The monarch of the forest fiercely clawed the empty air, then struck the ground like a clod, for the bullet had gone straight to its mark, and inflicted a mortal wound.

The dog had leaped aside but was unharmed, but now seeing his enemy disabled, he was about to attack it in turn when he was called back by his master.

The huge beast made a desperate effort to regain its feet. Its eyes were fixed now upon the marksman who had fired the fatal shot; but in a few moments more its agony was over, and it lay dead.

The terrified savages slowly returned to the spot with looks of amazement. They rolled the huge carcass over and looked in wonder at the hole where the bullet had entered.

"Blast my buttons if I ever expected to go lion-hunting in this country," said old Bill Travis, at last.

"Nor I, either, Bill; but now that it's all over with, I'm sorry that it has happened."

"Sorry for the chance of saying ye've killed such a roarer as that?"

"No—not exactly that; but I'm thinking that if our enemies are within earshot, they will know we are on their track."

CHAPTER XXI.

MUTINY—THE OLD SAILOR SPEAKS HIS MIND—A SUDDEN CHANGE OF BASE—A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

THE Boy Magician had the best of reasons for feeling uneasy, for, as he had intimated, the enemy would certainly take the alarm if they were within sound of the rifle-shot; hence, whatever was to be done must be done at once.

Ordering the savages to drag aside the dead lion and to conceal it in the bushes, he now proposed to advance at renewed speed, for if their enemies succeeded in reaching the village a recapture seemed hopeless.

It now occurred to him that it was past noon, and he recalled the fact that the savages chose that part of the day for a nap until the fiercest heat was over.

Even while the thought crossed Harry's mind one of the savages approached his side, and pointing to the sun overhead, he shut his eyes suggestively.

"I guess you'll have to postpone your snooze, old

chap," remarked Harry, shaking his head in the negative; but to his dismay he found the savages crouching down under the shade of a tree, and returned to his post without further delay.

In vain Harry fretted and threatened. He might as well have saved his breath; the blacks were not to be budge.

"The crew hev mutinied, I guess," remarked old Bill Travis, with a grin. "Just say the word, skipper, an' we'll show 'em how such lubbers are handled on board ship. If I had a good rope's end in my hand jest now I'd knock the sleep out of 'em."

At first Harry thought of resorting to rough measures, but if forced ahead against their will, they would prove of little use if their help should be required; so the brave boy concluded to go ahead without them.

"Come, Bill," said he, at last; "we have no more time to waste on them. You, I, and the dog must push on on our own hook. You see, if we can but head off our game before they reach their friends, I've no fear but what we can handle the whole gang ourselves."

"Right you are, my lad, as far as that goes; but there's small chance of ketchin' them. I fancy they've run their prize safely in port, afore this."

"Unless they have failed to reach the village," remarked Harry, impressively, "but I should not be surprised to find that they had gone to sleep on the road, like our friends, yonder."

"All right, my lad; sheer ahead, and we'll soon find out about that."

The pair, followed by the dog, once more advanced, stopping occasionally to listen attentively.

Ascending a rising piece of ground they were rewarded with a clear view ahead for nearly a mile, and plainly saw the collection of huts which they so well remembered.

But no sign of the party they were tracking.

"It's no use, lad," decided the old tar; "they've given us the slip, fair and square. We mout as well go back at once for more help afore we kin hope to tackle 'em."

"You can go back, if you feel like it, Bill."

"What in thunder do you mean? Do you suppose I'm goin' back alone?"

"You'll have to, if you go back now."

"Not by a jugful I don't! But what new kink hev ye got in yer head now, I'd like to know?"

"Simply this: I blame myself for the girl's capture, in the first place. Then, again, whatever we do must be done quickly. To go back for help would only be wasting valuable time. Besides, if we attacked them with a large force, they might kill the girl before we could rescue her, out of pure revenge."

"True as gospel, my lad; but, what in the name of Davy Jones can we do?"

"Go ahead as we are and trust to strategy to accomplish our purpose," was the decisive reply.

The old man stopped short and gazed in the young sailor's face as if to see whether he had not been joking, but seeing no indication of such a thing he exclaimed:

"Wal, I never! This beats the Dutch. So you kalkerlate you kin stalk in thar alone, seize the gal by the nape of the neck and walk out ag'in without as much as sayin' by yer leave? Is that yer racket?"

"Never mind what I propose doing. I see I cannot count on your services. Good-by."

For a moment Bill Travis stood dumfounded; then, when he saw Harry moving off rapidly, he called out:

"Ship ahoy thar! Do you refuse to let me sign articles for thet cruise?"

"I thought you would not care to sail in, seeing that it is a desperate undertaking," replied Harry, stopping for a moment.

"Wal," growled the old fellow, "when I promised yer dad I'd keep an eye on yer, I meant what I said. If yer fool enough to run yer neck in a noose, I must

be around to keep ye out. If these sarpints ketch the pair of us it will be sort of company for each other if we're roasted together."

It was evident from the old salt's words that he felt no confidence in their ability to outwit their foes, and Harry could but confess to himself that he was taking most desperate chances. Still, with dogged tenacity of purpose he refused to yield while a chance remained.

As Harry was firmly resolved upon making the attempt to recapture the girl, the matter was settled; and once more the pair started on, the dog following.

They had abandoned the trail now, as it led straight across the open stretch of ground.

On one side stretched a fringe of trees that extended nearly to the village.

Besides the grateful shade the trees afforded from the hot sun, they also served to screen their movements from curious eyes.

As they were forced to proceed with the utmost caution, it took them some time to pass over the comparatively short distance they had to go, but at last they reached the clump of trees which Harry had used as an ambush on the occasion of the battle when he had taken command.

From this point the village was at an elevation, sloping toward them. They were near enough to distinguish the enemy's movements, but not to recognize faces.

The savages had finished their noonday sleep and were bustling about the huts and grounds, so the two waited patiently where they were until night fall; then they slowly crept nearer the village.

The moon had already come out brightly, and they were forced to use every possible caution to avoid discovery. Harry kept a firm grip upon the dog's collar to prevent accident from that quarter.

At last the spies succeeded in reaching a point from which they could plainly see all that was transpiring in the village.

A number of the savages were seen to be engaged in gathering brush. In the center of the open space a post had been firmly planted, and around this the brush was placed in a circle.

Then they saw two men approach with a captive and lead her toward the stake.

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Harry, in a deep whisper, "the wretches mean to burn her alive!"

CHAPTER XXII.

PREPARING FOR THE SACRIFICE—AN INTERRUPTION IN THE PROCEEDINGS—SPINDLE-SHANKS ASTONISHED—A THRILLING ACT OF COURAGE—THE ENEMY AROUSED—BROUGHT TO BAY.

THERE was no mistaking the purpose of the savages now.

"We're too late, arter all," said the old sailor, in low tones of regret. "All we can do now, my lad, is to give 'em a volley from our battery and take to our heels."

"Not much," replied the Boy Magician, firmly. "If they harm the girl, they will have to take us first. Keep a tight grip on Bosun's collar, and stay right where you are until I return."

"But I tell ye—"

The sailor's remonstrance was suddenly cut short; the lad had already disappeared in the darkness.

The savages appeared to be in no hurry. Very leisurely they proceeded to execute their preparations for the sacrifice.

The bound captive uttered no sound. With savage stoicism she watched the work around her.

Old Spindle-shanks could be seen moving among them and giving orders. Occasionally he would stop to address words of cruel mockery to the victim.

Ten minutes passed, and still Harry had not returned. Old Bill Travis began to grow both impatient and uneasy.

The savages had at last completed their preparations. Spindle-shanks now strode forward with a

torch of resinous wood in his hands. The old sailor was in an agony of dread. Once more he raised his revolver to fire. The savage stooped to apply the torch to the dry brushwood; but at that instant there came a muffled sound from the opposite side of the village; then a colored ball of fire shot through the air, striking the medicine-man fairly in the face.

The old villain uttered a shriek of terror and tumbled over backward, while the torch fell from his nerveless fingers and was extinguished.

A look of grim satisfaction came over the face of the old seaman and he forbore to press the trigger.

Spindle-shanks looked dumfounded, as, on putting up his hands to his head, he found himself uninjured.

Puff—puff—puff, and three more colored balls of fire struck the earth quite near him. He sprang to his feet, a look of terrible rage upon his face.

Evidently he had seen fireworks before, and was not to be scared away by Roman candles; and now he knew that the white magician, his rival, was prowling in the vicinity; so he was once more cool and ready for business.

Instantly he fancied that his enemy must have come alone, else he would have boldly attacked them, and a fiendish look of exultation crossed his face at the thought that his hated foe was almost within his clutches.

Hurriedly calling a group of savages, he whispered a few words in their ear; then swiftly and silently they vanished in the darkness. At the same instant a shower of fiery balls were seen to shoot in the air from the same quarter in which the first had proceeded.

The old salt had been uneasily noting his enemy's movements. It looked now as if his young friend must surely be surrounded and captured.

"Blast it all they'll be bound to run him afoul now," he muttered.

"I guess not, Bill!"

It was Harry's voice that spoke, and the boy stood at his side! Not a sound had betrayed his approach to the old man's watchful ears.

"Snakes and alligators!" he remarked, in a whisper. "I thought ye war done for this time, my lad. The old sarpint has jest sent out a crowd to nab yer."

"So I see," was the reply, with a chuckle of delight. "All they'll find, though, will be a Chinese flower-pot in full blast. Now hand me the small package in your right-hand trowsers pocket. I've another surprise in store for these chaps."

Old Travis produced the package. Taking off his cap, Harry struck a match within it to conceal the light from the enemy. Then he lit a short fuse, and was ready for the next move.

By this time Spindle-shanks had explained to the tribe his suspicions, and had quieted their fears in regard to the fiery balls. All were now looking intently toward the spot where the flower-pot was still in operation. In anxious expectation they awaited the yell which would announce the capture of their enemy.

Touching the lighted fuse to the package, Harry threw it high in the air, at the same time breaking it apart. It fell in a shower of fragments directly behind the group of savages, between them and the stake where the victim was tied.

Turning around suddenly, at the noise, they saw a myriad of fiery serpents gliding over the ground at their feet! With howls of terror they fled from the spot, tumbling over each other in their frantic efforts to get away.

The Boy Magician had opened his clasp-knife and held it in his hand.

"Now is my chance," he whispered, hurriedly. "Pick off the first man you see who tries to stop me."

Then, with the speed of a deer, he darted out in the now deserted space. With one swift movement

He severed the captive's bonds and clasped her in his arms.

The excitement had been too much for her; she had fainted.

Without pausing to look around him he lightly raised his burden and darted back to his place of concealment.

It was a most daring act, well carried out. Its very boldness made it successful.

But the danger was not yet ended.

"Well done, my lad!" said the old sailor, approvingly. "The next thing is to slip our moorings and run for it."

"No," was the quick reply; "stay where you are for the present, and be ready to use your revolver."

"And be caught like a rat in a trap, I suppose."

"Better take our chances on that than to risk running into their hands in the dark! Look; they are coming back again. There'll be a circus now."

Sure enough some of the boldest had plucked up courage to return, seeing that the fiery serpents had disappeared.

A demoniac yell of rage broke from their lips as they saw their victim had disappeared.

Old Spindle-shanks approached the stake and examined the thongs that had confined his victim, and fairly danced with rage as he realized how neatly his enemy had outwitted him.

But he was not disposed to give up the fight thus. Calling the savages around him, he hurriedly issued his orders, and they quickly began to separate in every direction.

The party in concealment breathlessly awaited the result. Suddenly they saw a circle of lights surrounding the village about a quarter of a mile distant. The savages had determined to guard against the possibility of their enemy escaping them.

Harry began to recognize the fact that he had a wily foe to deal with.

"Jest as I told yer," whispered the veteran. "I could die easier, though, if I can get a chance to put in a shot 'twixt wind and water on the hull of that old pirate."

"He hasn't caught us yet," reminded Harry.

"Can you find your way back to the woods alone?"

"What p'int?"

"To the clump where we hid for a couple of hours before nightfall."

"Ay, lad; I reckon I know the bearings. Hello! the lass is comin' round!"

The girl was stirring uneasily. What if in her fright she should cry out?

"Keep quiet, Flora, for your life! You are in the hands of friends," whispered Harry in her ear, as she opened her eyes.

An expression of joy swept over her face. At the sound of that familiar voice she turned her eyes full upon him, but did not speak.

Very hastily the lad explained what had happened; then he bade her accompany the old sailor to the point designated.

The circle of torches was still somewhat beyond the point in question.

As the entire tribe were thus employed, the intervening space was therefore unoccupied by stragglers.

"You will have plenty of time to reach it, Bill, before they are near you," said the Boy Magician. "Once safely there you must trust me to take care of the rest. If you should hear the report of three pistol-shots you will know that I am captured. Under no other circumstances must you stir from the spot until I come."

"But the dog—"

"I shall keep by me, Quick, now! There is no time to be lost."

He watched them disappear, and once more turned his thoughts to action. Producing another flower-pot he lit it and remained to watch its result.

As he expected, he saw the torch-bearers approaching him.

He had given sufficient time for the old sailor to reach his destination. He could, of course, have used the same means of escape now, for the torch-bearers had spread in such a way as to leave the space open; but this might have endangered the safety of his friends.

In one hand he held a small tin canister having a fuse attached. His left hand firmly gripped the trusty rifle.

He spoke a word of caution to the dog at his side and waited the result.

Presently a yell of triumph broke from a dozen black throats. They had caught sight of their enemy, plainly outlined against the fireworks behind him.

The critical moment had arrived.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FATAL SHOT—SPINDLE SHANKS MEETS HIS DOOM—THE SAVAGES AGAIN BAFFLED—"BOSUN" DOES GOOD WORK—A SURPRISE FROM THE SEA.

ALREADY a number of spears were raised to hurl at Harry, but a sudden exclamation from Spindle-shanks caused them to lower them.

The wily savage was not satisfied that his enemy should die such an easy death. He had resolved to preserve his rival for the torture of the stake.

The circle began to narrow around the victim. It seemed impossible now for him to escape their clutches.

When they were within a few yards of him the Boy Magician lit the fuse of the can which he held in his hand. There was a sudden flash of fire followed by a dense smoke. A sharp report broke the stillness. Old Spindle-shanks threw up his hands without a cry and dropped like a log. The fatal bullet had gone through his heart.

Struck with terror at this daring act, the savages hesitated to rush into that dense smoke for their prey. In fact, it was so thick that they would be unable to distinguish friend from foe.

While they stood irresolute a puff of air swept it aside. To their consternation and dismay they saw the spot was vacant!

After firing the shot Harry had glided away under cover of the smoke cloud, followed by the dog.

The rest of the tribe on hearing the report of the rifle had rushed toward the spot with one accord.

As Harry sped on in the darkness, he saw one of the lighted torches approaching him from the opposite direction. Owing to the nature of the ground it would be impossible to avoid the savage torch-bearer. Quickly the young American sprang aside in the shadow of the bushes, so that his enemy would not discover him until almost upon the spot.

Now, speaking to the dog, Harry said, sharply:

"Take him, 'Bosun!'"

With one bound the faithful animal seized the astounded savage by the throat and bore him to the earth, and almost at the same instant Harry was upon him to prevent an outcry.

But his enemy lay still and motionless, for in falling his head had struck with such force as to render him insensible.

Without pausing, Harry called the dog and presently reached the spot where his anxious friends were awaiting him.

"Come!" he commanded, hastily; "we must skip out lively, now. We've stirred up a hornet's nest this time, and they'll be down on us like a whirlwind," and he led the way straight toward the beach.

Looking over their shoulders they could see the torches flitting about in every direction, showing that the enemy were still hunting for them; but all felt somewhat relieved to discover that none of them approached in the direction they had taken.

Not until they had reached the sandy beach did

Harry speak; then, as he relaxed his speed, he said quietly:

"I guess we are safe enough for the present," and turning to the old sailor he added: "You see, Bill, my plan was not quite as hopeless as you supposed."

"I allus said you wasn't afeard of man or devil, and now I know it," grunted the old man in reply. "There hain't another chap in Christendom that would hev taken the risk you hev this night."

"I would not have done it myself for an ordinary stake," was the grave reply. "But you see I was to blame for the accident in the first place. At any rate, they will have to look up a new leader before they attempt such a game again. Old Spindle-shanks has finished his plottings in this world."

"Then Satan has got his own, at last, my lad. That's one consolation."

"I'm sorry I had to shoot him, though, for I would have been satisfied with a lighter revenge; but it was my only hope; it was his life or mine, and he had to go."

"Tush, lad! I'm glad ye did it. Sich p'izen sar-pints as him hev no right to live. Jist to think of his intention of burnin' up this lovely gal out of pure revenge because he war kicked out of her tribe!"

The girl shuddered at this reference to the fate she had so narrowly escaped.

"Never mind, Flora," said Harry, soothingly; "it's all past now, and you are safe."

He left her side for a moment, and clambering lightly up to the branches of an adjacent tree, looked back in the direction of the village. The lights could still be seen dancing around in the darkness, but they were not approaching the shore; so, satisfied that the enemy were not likely to visit their place of concealment, he rejoined his companions, and they all proceeded on their way. Waukeela related to them the manner of her abduction.

After leaving Harry's presence, stung by what she considered as a reproach upon her humbler birth, she had walked on without paying heed to her course. Engrossed with her thoughts, she suddenly walked directly into the hands of a burly savage.

Before she could utter a cry of alarm, a rough hand grasped her throat, and she was threatened with instant death if she made a sound. The savage raised her in his arms, and with his companions hurried from the spot.

She learned from their talk that the abduction had been planned by Spindle-shanks to take place that night, and her own carelessness had rendered their task easy.

Harry also learned that at the time of his firing the shot at the lion, the abductors were but a short distance ahead. Alarmed by the sound, they had hurried forward at increased speed until the village was reached.

The medicine-man had been apprised of the occurrence, but paid little heed to it. Although knowing that the shot must have come from the white sorcerer, he did not think that they could have been in pursuit. He reasoned that had this been the case, they would not have used a weapon that would have betrayed their presence. For this reason he settled down to the conclusion that the latter were merely out on a hunt for game.

Harry also ascertained that the stake was often used by the tribe from which she had been rescued. The victim was usually tortured in a hundred ways before the flames finished their work. Her own tribe had years ago abandoned the practice through her father's teaching.

Thus passing away the time, they walked on as fast as their tired limbs would allow. Harry and the old sailor had eaten nothing since morning and were well-nigh exhausted.

The lad made no reference to the conversation of the preceding night. He felt that the less said on that subject the better.

Just at daylight they reached their own village. A wild cry of delight broke from the lips of their

friends as they saw them approaching. The old chief's joy nearly overpowered him as he listened to the story of the white magician's bravery, told by the lips of the girl in her native language.

Harry saw nothing of the three savages who had started out with him that morning, and who had gone to sleep by the way. Making inquiry he found that they had not yet returned. Feeling sure that they would do so shortly he dismissed the matter from his mind. In fact, their absence troubled him less than the thought that the skin of the slain lion might be spoiled by wild beasts before he could secure it.

About an hour afterward he was gratified to see them returning. They bore with them the coveted skin, which they had deftly removed.

After what they had heard of the Boy Magician's bravery they had but little room left for further admiration.

But the old chief must also fear of the combat with the lion, and so it was again repeated for his benefit.

The old chief warmly embraced the white youth; then, with an extra burst of gratitude, he strode forward and placed Flora's hand in that of the lad, at the same time uttering a few words.

The girl blushed crimson, but refused to interpret their meaning.

"I guess he means to give you the prize you've captured," suggested the old sailor, with a smile.

Such doubtless was the old chief's intention, and a puzzled look crept over his face as he saw no movement made to acknowledge it.

It was a most embarrassing position to the boy. He saw something must be said or done to change the current of the conversation. Looking up, he caught sight of a large bird sailing leisurely overhead. His rifle was in his hand. In another moment it was raised to his shoulder. A sharp sound broke the stillness of the scene and all eyes were directed upward. They saw the huge wings flap aimlessly, and presently the great bird dropped with a thud to the ground some ten yards distant.

The dog bounded to the spot, seized the dead bird by the neck and brought it to his master. A cry of delight from the savages testified to their admiration of his skill. The bird was about the size of a wild turkey, but of a species with which he was unfamiliar. Its plumage, however, was brilliant in the extreme.

Seeing the chief's eyes fixed longingly upon it, he picked it up and presented it to him with a bow.

He afterward learned that it was of a species most highly valued among the savages for the beauty of its feathers which were used for ornament. Besides, they were seldom caught, and this made them the more valuable.

The old chief received the present with tokens of approval and delight. At the same time he was resolved not to be outdone in generosity.

From some hidden receptacle about his person, he drew out a fiery red stone and gravely handed it to the young American.

It was a magnificent ruby and glowed in the sunlight like a living coal of fire.

While he was thus admiring it, Harry was aroused by the distant boom of a cannon. Turning to the seaward he beheld a sight that stirred his pulses with new life.

About a mile distant, with every sail spread, was a large man-of-war.

At the same time they saw a smaller ship, also with all canvas spread, and seemingly endeavoring to escape.

Their course was leading them both toward the open bay where they stood.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE OLD SAILOR SPEAKS—THE FRIGATE IN PURSUIT—
A SHIP ON FIRE—THE STORY OF THE CHASE—AN UN-
EXPECTED MEETING.

In a moment the tribe were alive with excitement. Rushing to the beach in a body, they stood gazing at the strange spectacle. Harry and the old sailor followed in their footsteps—the boy's feelings difficult to be described. Mingled with the thought of being once more enabled to reach home and friends was a bitter regret at parting with the girl who stood beside him.

Not a word did the maiden utter, but her downcast look bespoke the heaviness of her heart.

The Boy Magician now felt that his very soul revolted at the idea of separation.

But no such thoughts were disturbing the mind of the old sailor.

"Shiver my shrouds!" he roared. "I see what that gun means now. Look yonder!"

Absorbed in watching the frigate, his eye had but just caught sight of the other vessel, which was straining every rope to get away from her persistent pursuer.

"It's no use," he added, as his practiced eye took in the situation. "They can't weather the point on that tack, an' to go about would be only to run square in the teeth of the frigate. They're bound to be caught now. That shot was a notice to 'em to 'heave to.'"

Let us explain the situation in a few words: the home of the tribe was in the hollow of a land-locked bay, some three miles across at its mouth. The frigate was to windward and held a commanding position. Only by weathering the point could the smaller ship escape. It was now seen that this could not be accomplished, and capture now seemed a foregone conclusion.

The old sailor presently made another startling discovery.

"Great Neptune!" he exclaimed; "as I live it is the old 'Trident.'"

"It can't be," replied Harry, astounded at the thought. "She must be miles away, before this."

"But I tell you, lad, I ain't mistaken in the craft. Don't I know every rope and spar on board of her? Thar's her main-to'gallant-mast that war sprung in the last storm. She must hev turned out of her course to get rid of that chap. Hooray! It's an American frigate. I kin make out her flag now!"

Harry had to admit that his old friend was right, and the thought added new interest to the scene.

While they watched, another sheet of flame broke from the side of the frigate, and a thirty-two-pound solid shot struck the water close to the ship.

Slowly but surely the man-of-war was approaching her prey, when the doomed ship suddenly changed her tactics. Putting up her helm she swung off before the wind, and headed for the shore about a mile distant from where the savages stood!

Their purpose was quickly seen. They intended to beach the vessel.

The frigate altered her course at the same time, hoping to avert the loss of the ship. Two of her crew were stationed in the chains, heaving the lead. Her commander certainly had no intention of being drawn into a trap.

The wind was light, and both vessels made but slow progress.

Meanwhile, a boat was lowered from the ship on the side opposite from their enemy, and its occupants pulled hastily for the shore.

"Those chaps are going to save thar skins, arter all," muttered the old salt.

But the frigate commander had seen the move and instantly lowered two of his boats, which were rowed with all speed for the ship, now slowly moving toward the beach; but as the frigate's boats touched her side, a muffled sound was heard, and a column of smoke shot up in the air.

The deserters had fired the ship!

But the frigate's crew had been too close on their heels. Part of them were set to work to extinguish the flames, and the rest sprung to the wheel and braces.

Had it not been for the fact that the tide was rising, even their prompt action could not have saved her.

Keeping out in the open bay, where there was sufficient water, she rounded up in the wind and dropped her anchor.

The fire had speedily been brought under control and extinguished.

The frigate ran in near by and also came to anchor.

In a few minutes afterward another boat was lowered, and pulled toward the beach, where the savages still stood watching.

"We're saved at last!" exclaimed the old boatswain, joyfully. "I hope the Trident's crew will get away, though, for I should hate to see 'em hung."

But Harry was far from feeling elated over the prospect.

Turning toward Flora, he saw her eyes were suffused with tears.

The parting, then, would be none the less bitter for her.

In that brief moment Harry came to a sudden and fixed resolution. Drawing her aside, he whispered a few words in her ear that caused her face to break into happiness, like sunshine after a shower.

By this time the frigate's boat had reached the beach, and the officer in charge sprung quickly out.

His face wore a look of surprise and inquiry, as Harry stepped forward and extended his hand in greeting.

"On the part of the tribe you see before you, I bid you a cordial welcome among us, sir," said the young American, with a twinkle of fun in his eyes.

"Allow me to express my thanks for your courtesy!" replied the officer, not losing sight of his politeness in his amazement. "How happens it that I meet with white men among these heathens?"

"It is a long story," replied Harry. "Suffice it to say that we were originally part of the crew of the Trident."

"That's the ship yonder that we have just captured," said the officer, with a puzzled air. "What was the matter that they took to their heels?"

"How did you happen to give chase, then?" asked Harry.

"Well, as to that, we never suspected anything wrong at first. You see, we wanted to overhaul her to send a mail home, but she seemed loth to make our acquaintance and we were equally determined that she should. Then we began to see there was a screw loose somewhere, so we gave chase, with the result you have seen. The crew have slipped us, it seems; but we have the ship, and that's by far the best of the bargain."

"By the way, your savage friends seem to have some handsome women among them," casting an admiring glance upon Flora as he spoke.

"The lady is under my protection, sir," returned Harry, with quiet dignity.

The officer saw a blush mantle the girl's face and realized in a moment that she understood his words.

"Oho!" he remarked, with a smile; "that's the lay of the land, is it? Excuse me for my thoughtlessness, young man, and allow me to say I respect your judgment."

His manner was sincere and Harry saw no insult had been intended.

"And who is this chap?" added the officer, turning toward Bill Travis. "If he isn't a regular old shell-back then I lose my guess."

"Right you are, sir!" responded the old sailor, proudly, at the same time touching his cap. "The youngster and I, together with the little darky grin

ning yonder, parted company with the Trident's crew, seeing as we couldn't agree. We're blamed glad for the chance to get away from this nest of black sarpints. It's been nothing but fighting and squabbling among 'em since we fell into thar hands. I sha'n't feel really safe until we're once more aboard ship. Of course your honor won't refuse us passage so far as ye go."

"Certainly not, my honest friend. Uncle Sam never turns his back upon a shipmate in distress, you can count upon that."

"Hooray! Hooray! Do you hear that, my lad?" cried the old sailor, tossing his hat in the air. "Hallo, Snowball! what do ye stand thar grinning like a crazy ijit for? Back to the tent with yer at once, and lug our dunnage here!"

"Hold on a moment, Snowball!" commanded Harry, quietly. "You can bring Bill's property if he wants it; but let mine alone."

"What's that?" demanded the old man, with staring eyes, and seemingly in doubt as to the evidence of his own ears.

Harry repeated the words he had used.

"Ye cantankerous varmint! Ye'll go if we hev to send a file of marines to take yer, my lad. What in creation has got into ye now? Do ye mean to say ye're going to stay with these bloody heathens?"

"I'm not so certain but that I may do that identical thing," answered Harry, composedly; then in an undertone, audible only to his friend, he added:

"If Flora will accompany me as my wife, I will go. Otherwise I shall surely remain where I am."

This assertion fairly staggered the old seaman.

Now that a way of escape was open to them, he saw that Harry's proposed act might meet with serious disapproval from his father. True, Flora's complexion was not a whit darker than that of a Spaniard, and there was no denying that she was both good, pure and handsome. He remembered, also, how strongly he had but lately advocated that very act, and so his own batteries would be turned against him.

"Never mind them, Snowball," said he, again turning to the little ducky, who had not stirred from the spot. "It seems we're in for a longer cruise than I thought."

The officer, meanwhile, had been quietly conversing with the Boy Magician; then he once more stepped in the boat and was rowed back to his vessel, while Wankeela and Harry walked off together.

"Humph!" grunted the old salt, following them with his eyes. "Thar they go, as happy as a pair of turtle-doves. Bill Travis, you old fool, you've got mixed up with a purty kettle of fish! The youngster has made up his mind, and all the lawyers in creation couldn't change him. I s'pose there's nothing left for me to do but find some old mummy that will take me for a mate and settle down here for life. It looks hard, arter all the trials I've gone through with, to fetch up at last in sich a harbor! The gal, of course, won't leave her own people, and he won't leave the gal. Blast my eyes, I do say!"

By this time the old man had succeeded in working himself up into quite a heat of anger. Not wishing to see any one in this mood, he strolled on along the beach, neither seeing nor caring in what direction his course tended.

"Shipmate, ahoy!" cried a voice that suddenly roused him from his abstracted reverie.

Looking to his right, in the shadow of a tree, he saw the burly form of Jack Bowline, the leader of the mutinous crew.

"Blast yer!" muttered the old man, striding forward with uplifted arm; "ef it hadn't been for you, this thing could never have happened!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BOY MAGICIAN'S AVOWAL—A NEW PHASE OF THE QUESTION—HOMEWARD BOUND—THE MEETING.

"HANDS off, Bill, if ye don't want a shot in yer hull," cried Jack Bowline, menacingly. "It's bad enough to be hunted like rats in their holes, without having an old shipmate tryin' to make matters wuss."

Bill Travis, thus recalled to himself, stopped and looked around. Before him stood five men, the remnant of the Trident's crew. Every face among them wore a hunted expression that was painful to look upon.

"Is this all that's left of you?" asked Bill.

"It's all we must'r, now," responded Bowline, regretfully. "The rest of 'em died of the hurts they got in the scrimmage. Oh, ye needn't look at me," he added, touching his left arm which was suspended in a sling. "That wasn't got in the fight. I owe that to the youngster's shot when we war chasing ye in the boat."

"And it sarved you right!" retorted Bill. "You had no business to meddle with us."

"We wouldn't have meddled with ye, Bill, only we war too drunk to know better. Ye see, we war scared as how ye might somehow put some 'un on our track, an' we didn't want that. Never mind, though," he added, with a sad smile; "I don't bear any grudge ag'in' either of ye, for all that. Ye war only defending yer own lives. I'm glad we didn't overhaul ye, for it's one less crime ag'in' us."

"Jack," said Bill, gravely, "do you remember what I told ye when ye first proposed mutiny? Didn't I say that no good would come of it in the end?"

"No preachin', Bill, if ye please! We took our chances and that ends it. At any rate, we've saved our necks for this time. I wish them joy, if they hope to ketch us in *this* country."

Bill sighed. "You've only a worse fate ahead of you, I'm afeard, mate," returned the old bo's'n, regretfully. "These savages are wuss nor Tartars to get along with, even if ye manage to get on the right side of 'em—which I much doubt."

"But you did?"

"Yes; thanks to the lad's jugglery. They took him for a magician, you see, and were kinder afeard of his power; but fer all that, it's been touch and go with us more nor once."

"I guess we can manage that part of the business," replied Bowline, hopefully. "I suppose you and your crowd will take passage on the frigate?"

"Probably so. Is thar anything I kin do for you?"

"No. Avast there a moment. Give me your paw."

The old sailor stretched out his hand.

"Ye meant it all fer the best," continued Bowline, "but we war too crazy ter heed yer words. Still, thar's no denyin' the fact that we war treated like dogs."

Bill Travis shook hands with the men for the last time; then they turned away and disappeared in the woods.

He watched them until they were out of sight before he retraced his steps.

In spite of himself he could but feel sorry for them in his heart.

"Poor lads!" he muttered; "I'm sorry for 'em; indeed I am. When the judgment day comes 'round I wonder which will be found most to blame—they for the mutiny, or the skipper that druv' 'em to it by his cruelty?"

The frigate's boat was again approaching the beach. The stern-sheets were filled with officers arrayed in bright uniforms.

"Here comes the hull kitten crew of 'em!" he exclaimed, in surprise. "I wonder what in thunder brings so many of 'em at once?"

But he was not long to remain in doubt. Harry advanced to meet them, and led the way directly to the village. Wondering much what was about to

transpire, and with not the first suspicion of the truth, the old sailor followed on behind.

The savages, though somewhat shy of the dashing sailors, were nevertheless very friendly toward them.

Leading the way into the presence of the chief, the Boy Magician introduced his friends.

The tribe had gathered round in a circle and were viewing the scene in silence.

In the presence of all Harry related what had transpired from the moment of the mutiny on the Trident, and ended his narration with the frank avowal that he now intended to marry the chief's protégée and adopted daughter. For this purpose he had secured the services of the frigate's chaplain, who now stood by his side. Henceforward her home was to be his, and her people his people.

"The youngster's clean gone daft!" muttered the old sailor. "Surely these officers will try to bring him to his senses. That I should ever have lived to see such a bright fellow makin' a fool of himself this way! If I had my say, I'd clap him in double irons and run him off on board ship to give him a chance to come to his wits. That's jest what I'd do!"

But, to his utter dismay, he saw that on hearing the story, the officers unanimously approved of the step he proposed taking. Not a dissenting voice was heard among them.

Seeing that Harry truly loved the girl, and *vice-versa*, they could not demur to the union.

The chaplain of the ship now stepped forward and amid a breathless silence performed the ceremony that bound them together for life.

"Sold and delivered, by thunder!" ejaculated the old sailor at its conclusion.

Then, advancing, he remarked, with grim humor: "If some of you chaps will only hev the kindness to pick out a greasy squaw for me, I'll take a dose of the same medicine. You see, gents, I'm summat flabbergasted with all this business. Seeing as how I'm fixed here for life, I might as well go the hull hog at once, and I really haven't much wits left to choose for myself."

"Wait a moment, my friends!" interposed Flora, quietly; "I have something yet to do. My husband is willing to leave home and friends for my sake. I can appreciate the sacrifice and honor him for the love that prompted him to make it; but I do not propose to accept it. I shall leave my people, who will least miss me, and go with him to his home across the seas."

The old seaman was in ecstasies at this avowal.

"Hooray!" he cried, executing a few steps of the sailor's hornpipe. "Hooray! Give me your hand on that, my beauty! I've been a selfish old fool and I now admit it."

Harry was none the less pleased at this announcement.

The old chief also expressed his approval of the plan. To the savage mind it seemed but natural that the woman should in all things be subservient to that of her master. Indeed, they carried the doctrine so far that their women in reality were more slaves than companions.

The tribe celebrated the occasion by a series of rude dances, while the officers looked on and quietly enjoyed the fun. Toward sundown they prepared to return to their ship.

Before leaving, Harry presented the chief with the rifle and what ammunition was left, as a token of his regard. The lion-skin, however, he took with him as a trophy of his skill.

After reaching the frigate's deck he happened to think of the bag of gold he had hidden on the island, and which had been the property of the dead mate. The excitement of the occasion until then

had banished wholly from his mind all remembrance of the treasure.

On relating the circumstance to the captain, a boat's crew was at his disposal to secure it.

Shortly afterward this was accomplished and the bag placed in security until it could be handed over to the one to whom it rightfully belonged.

The captured vessel was to return at once to the United States in charge of a prize-crew detailed for that purpose. The Boy Magician's party were to go with the vessel. Before nine o'clock that night the entire party once more stepped on the Trident's deck. Both vessels were got under way at once.

No steps had been taken to secure the capture of the recreant crew, on shore; nor did they even take the boat in which the mutineers had escaped. The commander of the frigate foresaw that there was misery enough in store for them where they were and that the boat might yet prove of service to them.

It was a beautiful moonlight night and with a light breeze, the two vessels sailed out of the harbor, and before midnight they parted company on diverging paths.

After an uneventful voyage, the Trident once more entered New York harbor.

Harry felt somewhat doubtful of his father's approval of the course he had taken; still, as his own heart was satisfied, he cared little for that, save he did not wish needlessly to anger his father. He was old enough and able enough to rely upon his own abilities, if necessary, for a livelihood.

Old Bill Travis had, long before, got over his pet, and had come to look upon the girl as little less than an angel, and would have served her to the last drop of his blood. He foresaw the difficulty that was yet to be met and offered his services as a mediator—an offer which Harry thankfully accepted. He did not wish to be party to a needless quarrel if his father proved angry.

For this reason he waited in the cabin of the Trident with his bride until the old sailor returned.

The father had long mourned his son as dead.

In his joy at learning that he still lived, it was some time before he could compose himself sufficiently to listen to the whole story; then old Bill narrated it all, in his quiet way, ending with the story of the marriage.

His listener uttered not a word or sign of disapproval.

"Where is he?" he cried. "Why did he not come to me at once? He would have been no son of mine if he had acted otherwise than he did. As for his marriage, he certainly has a right to make his own choice."

Not many minutes afterward Mr. Somers entered the Trident's cabin, and father and son were locked in a loving embrace.

Mr. Somers was delighted, too, at the wondrous beauty and sweetness of his son's girl-wife.

Suitable clothing was at once provided for her, and then the entire party were driven to the merchant's home where the story of strange adventure was once more retold to a deeply interested audience of friends.

Nor were Snowball and the dog forgotten; both were petted and flattered to their utmost desire.

Flora was at once placed under suitable teachers to instruct her in the duties of her new position, and she proved so apt a scholar that in a few weeks' time no one would have guessed that the lovely little lady of the Somers' fine home was, but a year before, the untutored child of a savage land, and in all his after years her fond husband felt thankful for the fate that had led him to enact the ludicrous and perilous rôle of a Boy Magician.

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